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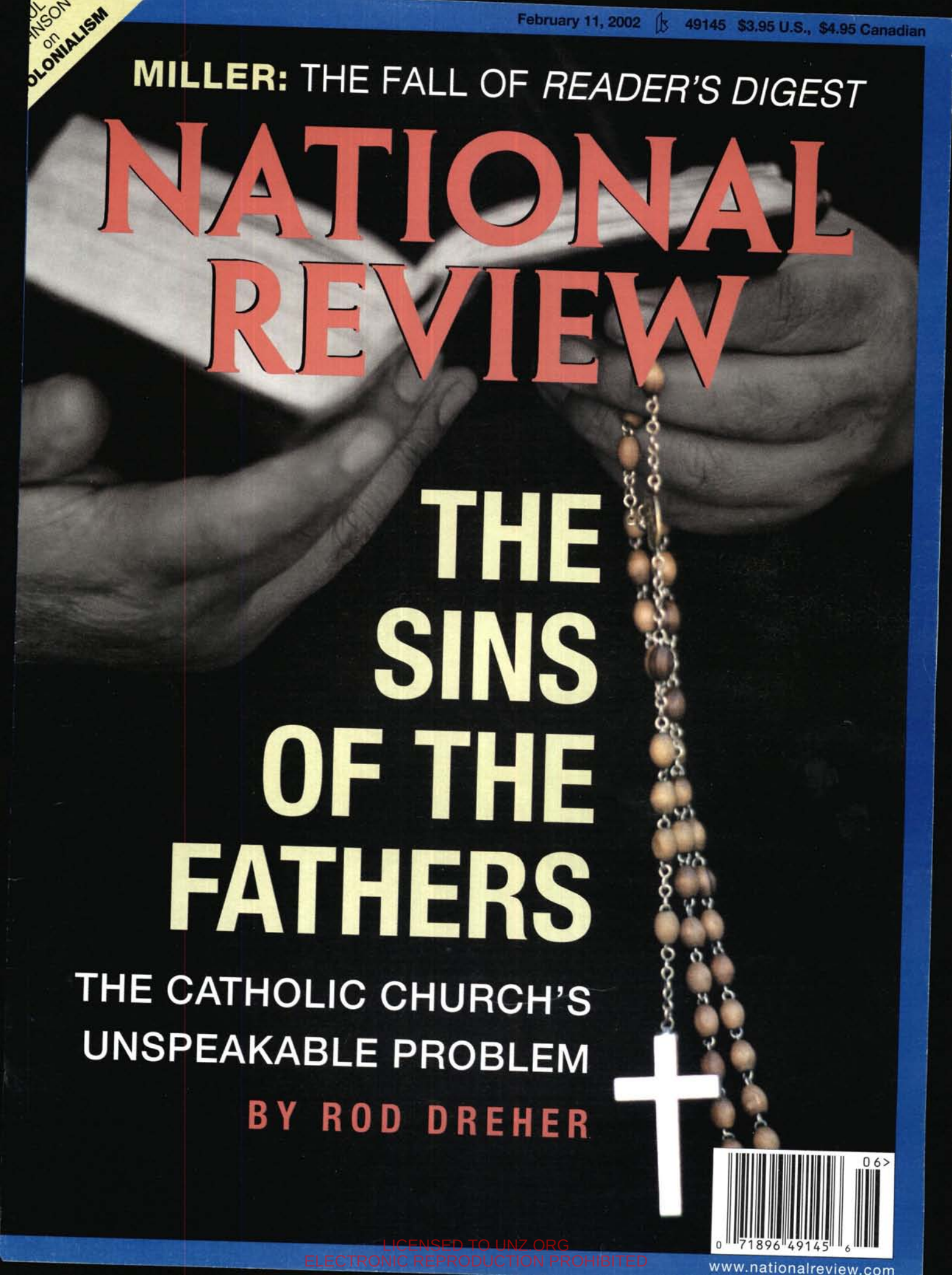

THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S UNSPEAKABLE PROBLEM

BY ROD DREHER

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■ LETTERS ■

AIRPORT WOES

Kudos to Richard Lowry for his article on airport security ("Profiles in Cowardice," Jan. 28). My husband and I, both 67, both white, both dressed "to the nines" for first class, were recently about to board a Delta flight in Atlanta for a trip to London when we were pulled out of line and searched. We were annoyed, not because the search held us up, but because those doing the search were wasting their time. What terrorist profile did we fit? None, of course. We were singled out to show how very fair and politically correct the airlines are. This egregious waste of time and resources did not make our flight safer. Mr. Lowry hit the nail on the head.

Nan C. Haugland
Anderson, S.C.

A TRIBUTE

It was with piercing sadness that I read of the death of Warren Steibel (The Week, Jan. 28). He was one of the most cantankerous fellows I ever met, yet he was warm, kind, humorous, and charming.

He called me one night about a *Firing Line* debate that Hillsdale College was sponsoring and *screamed* at me every vile epithet known in back alleys. When he came to campus, I reacted in self-defense, needling him to the point that he threw a full plate of food across the cafeteria.

We subsequently had lunch together, and he was as warm and as soft as any human being could be. The lunch was pure fun. Then we went to the debate site, and I never knew when he would be Jekyll and when he would be Hyde. But when he was offensive, it was because he wanted *Firing Line* to go well.

The fact that I have a heavy heart about his death shows that the warm Warren easily triumphs over the other one. His veneer was tough, but it was just that, a veneer. He was a good man, with a big heart.

Ron Trowbridge
Durham, Me.

NOT ALL NUTS

In the Dec. 31 issue, Rob Long ("Free to Go Bad") jokes that "a shrink's kid is always nuts." Lots of shrinks' kids are nuts, and even more are liberal—but I can assure you that you've got at least one shrink's kid among your subscribers. And I pass my issues along to my dad when I'm through with them.

J. Ryan Gilfoil
San Francisco, Calif.

PANELIST'S PREROGATIVE

A word that Florence King has used twice recently has me defeated. I have checked two dictionaries and even a slang dictionary, all to no avail.

Please tell me, what is a "phartling"?

Eleanor Hazzard
Wallingford, Pa.

FLORENCE KING REPLIES: *Once more unto the breach I go to answer this question, which has cropped up seven times in my mail so far. Nobody can find "phartling" in the dictionary because I made it up. It's my word for children. I took the vulgarism for anal flatulence, added "ling" to establish the diminutive, and changed "f" to "ph" because it's more ladylike that way. This is what is known as a "portmanteau word": one that merges the sounds and meanings of two different words. (Example: "wiggle" plus "writhe" equals "wriggle.") I feel free to do this sort of thing because, as a member of the Usage Panel of the* American Heritage Dictionary, *I'm one of the people who get to rule on what is a word and what isn't. Thus, as our fighting men 'n' wimmin say every single time somebody interviews one of them, "I'm just doing my job." It isn't the first time that something like this has popped into my head, and it won't be the last. I was going to change "your loved ones" to "your loathed ones," but the late Quentin Crisp beat me to it. Since I consider plagiarism a worse sin than drowning your phartlings in the bathtub, I will duly cite him if I ever use it.*

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters should be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com or by fax to (212) 849-2835 or by mail to Letters Editor, NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for space and clarity.

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School Reform: Stay the Course

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Americans are famous for demanding instant results. Real school reform, however, takes time. **Massachusetts embarked on a reform strategy in 1993, and only now is the state seeing results.**

In 1993, the state legislature agreed to add $1 billion annually to education funding, with the expectation that students would thus be prepared to pass new state examinations ten years later. After developing new standards and tests, the state began testing students on a trial basis in 1998.

Tenth-grade students were required to pass state tests (known as MCAS, for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) in mathematics and English to qualify for a high school diploma. Those who failed had four additional chances to retake the tests.

The early returns of state testing were terrible. Half the tenth graders failed the math test, and a third failed the English test. The failure rates were even higher for minority students. Critics began attacking the reforms, charging that they stifled teachers' creativity and, worse, endangered minority youth, who might be denied a diploma. The Massachusetts Teachers Association launched a $600,000 advertising campaign against state testing, and the state's local school boards urged lawmakers to repeal the requirement that students pass the exams to graduate.

But state officials held firm. Their persistence was rewarded this fall when the results of the 2001 tests were made public. Knowing that this was the first time that the tests counted for graduation, tenth-graders took them seriously. Remarkably, the failure rate on the math test dropped from 45 percent in 2000 to 25 percent in 2001 and from 34 percent to 18 percent in English.

Minority students showed significant progress. The failure rate of African American tenth graders fell from 60 percent to 40 percent in English and from 77 percent to 52 percent in mathematics. Among Hispanic students, the failure rate dropped from 66 percent to 48 percent in English and from 79 percent to 58 percent in mathematics.

Many of those who failed received marks that were just below passing. With more effort and study, they will pass on their next try. The state has created remedial programs to help those who failed, and teachers know that they have a specific pool of youngsters who need extra help to master English and mathematics. With each retake of the tests, the number of students who fail will grow smaller.

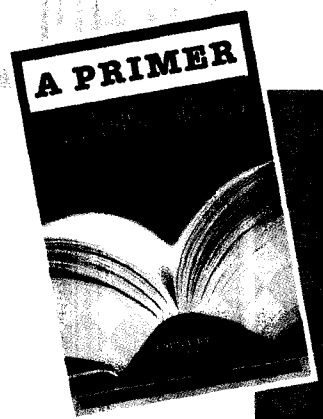
The Massachusetts tests, it must be noted, are among the most challenging in the nation. The math tests are rigorous assessments of problem-solving skills, and the English tests have many essay questions based on excellent literature.

Massachusetts has begun to reap the rewards of standards-based reform. **The state bet that students could meet high expectations, and it backed up its bet with serious new funding and excellent tests.** State officials passed their own test, enduring a barrage of criticism and predictions of disaster.

The real winners in Massachusetts are the students. From now on, their diplomas will signify that they have mastered important knowledge and skills and that they are ready for college and the modern workplace.

— *Diane Ravitch*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University



Want to learn more about K–12 education policy?

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Bush** in Illinois: "I've made up my mind. The tax-relief plan we passed, which you're now beginning to feel the effects of, is going to be permanent." . . . Bush, in New Orleans: "I like to remind people: Those who shut down [free] trade aren't confident. They're not confident in the American worker. They're not confident in the American entrepreneur. They're not confident in American products." . . . Bush schedules China visit for February 21–22. . . . In Bloomberg poll, Bush tops **Al Gore** in 2004 matchup, 64 percent to 27 percent. . . . In Fox News poll, 83 percent approve of Bush's job performance and 49 percent say they would vote for him if 2004 election "were held today."

■ Sen. **Zell Miller** (D., Ga.): "I had watched in great disappointment when we did nothing after the terrorists first attacked the World Trade Center in 1993, killing six and injuring more than 1,000 Americans. Then again, when 16 U.S. servicemen were killed in the bombing of the Khobar Towers in 1996 and we still did nothing. I watched when U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Nairobi were attacked in 1998, killing 263 persons, and the only response we made was firing a few missiles on an empty terrorist camp. It was a wimpy response so totally inadequate I was ashamed." . . . In CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll, 47 percent rate **Bill Clinton**'s handling of terrorism as good or very good, 48 percent call it poor or very poor, and 58 percent say their opinion of him has remained the same. . . . Clinton chief of staff **Maggie Williams**, in *USA Today*: "Is he [Clinton] aggressive about making certain that the ideas he's tried to move forward get a flagpole in history? You betcha." . . . Bush adviser **Karl Rove**, in *New York Times*: "A president who says, 'I'm focused on my legacy, how's history going to see me?' and lets that become the driver of their actions is somebody who is going to be badly rewarded by history."

■ Sen. **Edward Kennedy** (D., Mass.): "We can and should postpone a portion of the future tax cuts." . . . Democrat pollster **Celinda Lake**, in *New York Times*: "We don't have that much credibility on taxes." . . . White House economic adviser **Lawrence Lindsey**, in *Washington Post*: "Kennedy has done the nation a service by making explicit the Democrats' economic plan: increase taxes." . . . **Grover Norquist** of Americans for Tax Reform, in *Washington Post*: "If the 2002 election is about raising taxes, we will have a Republican Senate." . . . Gore: "I am concerned about the economy. I was the first one laid off."

■ Attorney general **John Ashcroft** on U.S.-born Taliban warrior **John Walker**: "Youth is not absolution for treachery, and personal self-discovery is not an excuse to take up arms against one's country. Misdirected Americans cannot seek direction in murderous ideologies and expect to avoid the consequences." . . . Marine Brig. Gen. **Michael Lehnert** on Taliban prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, in *Miami Herald*: "These are not nice people. Several have publicly stated here that they intend to kill an American before they leave Guantanamo Bay. We will not give them that satisfaction." . . . Homeland security director **Tom Ridge** floats idea of combining Border Patrol, Coast Guard, and Customs Service into single border-enforcement agency. . . . Milken Institute says 9/11 attacks will have cost 1.8 million jobs by end of this year. . . . In Fox News poll, 86 percent say airport security screeners should be U.S. citizens and 83 percent say they should have high-school diplomas.

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■ NBC's **Tim Russert** to **Pat Buchanan**: "Are you done with elective politics?" Buchanan: "I think the American people have spoken pretty clearly to that issue." . . . Texas won't have majority race or ethnicity by 2006 and Hispanics will become majority by 2030s, says state demographer. . . . "People say that **Bobby Byrd** has used his clout in the Senate to send West Virginia world-record amounts of money," says Rep. **Patrick J. Kennedy** (D., R.I.). "But on a per capita basis, I'm the real champ, and I don't hesitate to boast about it."

■ Worldwatch Institute president **Christopher Flavin**: "If the lofty social and ecological goals of the [1992] Rio Earth Summit had been achieved, it is possible that the crisis of the last year would not have occurred." . . . Stanford history professor **Barton Bernstein** on why his school eliminated ROTC a generation ago, in university alumni magazine: "Basically the curriculum was awful." . . . Stanford senior **Gary Hernandez** replies: "I don't see why I can get credit for posture and hip-hop but not military navigation." . . . MTV and Showtime plan new cable channel for gays. . . . NBC executive **Scott Sassa** on family-friendly shows, in Associated Press: "We don't see them as really the kinds of shows that are in our wheelhouse." . . . ABC News anchor **Peter Jennings**: "You know, Americans are pretty insular for the most part."

■ CIA report says China may have 100 long-range nuclear missiles aimed at United States by 2015. . . . State Department spokesman **Philip Reeker**: "The policies that the [Robert] **Mugabe** government [of Zimbabwe] has taken have led the country to economic and political rack and ruin, and it's time for them to think about the future of their country, the future of their people, and focus on democracy."

■ On Air Force One, Bush sends bag of pretzels to press cabin with note: "Chew slowly." **NR**

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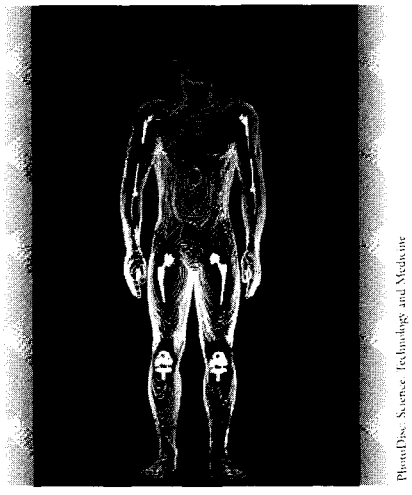

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THE WEEK

■ *Talk* stopped. The buzz was.

■ Saudi Arabia is reportedly considering asking America to quit its bases there. The strategic calculations that made the U.S.-Saudi alliance important to both sides—as a way to balance the Soviet Union globally, and Iraq and Iran regionally—are becoming obsolete. As those considerations have vanished or receded, the Saudis' broad sympathy with Islamic militancy has come to the fore. If we are chased from Saudi Arabia, it will be a stinging blow to American prestige and provide a vindication of the Sept. 11 attacks, which were intended primarily to remove the U.S. from the Arabian peninsula. The House of Saud will have sided with the militants, and America will therefore have to do all it can to overthrow it. For years, the U.S. has maintained a presence in Saudi Arabia to prevent the massive oil fields there from being taken over by a hostile power. Too late.

■ President Bush's first State of the Union address will necessarily focus on the progress of the war against terrorism, and the challenges we face in defending ourselves against this threat. We hope Bush uses the opportunity to prepare the country for further exertions, especially in Iraq. But he should also serve notice that he is willing to use his political capital to advance his domestic agenda—specifically, to promote a freer market in energy, the true retirement security that individual investment can provide, the sanctity of life, and a patriotism that affirms our common identity as Americans. He should announce his intent not only to resist backsliding on welfare reform, but to build on reform's success. Finally, he should explicitly challenge Democrats on their obstruction of judicial nominees. This year, the Democrats will try to associate themselves with the president (as long as he remains popular) while undermining his domestic agenda. Every line of the State of the Union that keeps Democrats slouching glumly in their seats works against this strategy.

■ On the weekend of the 29th anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*, President Bush proclaimed a "National Sanctity of Human Life Day." The proclamation included a short, yet remarkably thoughtful and eloquent, case for protecting life in all its stages, from conception through old age—a case drawing on the thought of the Founders and the rhetoric of Lincoln. Daringly, Bush even alluded to September 11 in a way that implicitly answered the social liberals who have tried to use the attack to discredit religious conservatism, without making cheap partisan points himself: "On September 11, we saw clearly that evil exists in this world, and that it does not value life. The terrible events of that fateful day have given us, as a Nation, a greater understanding about the value and wonder of life. Every innocent life taken that day was the most important person on earth to somebody; and every death extinguished a world. Now we are engaged in a fight against evil and tyranny to preserve and protect life. In so doing, we are standing again for those core principles upon which our Nation was founded." Pro-lifers said that the weakness of Bush's father on abortion was that he was "all action and no talk." That can't be said of the son.

■ Conservatives who complain that Bush isn't getting anything in return for his chumminess with Ted Kennedy—most recently, the president praised Kennedy as an innovative reformer on education—just aren't paying attention. Kennedy has done Bush an enormous service by calling for the "delay" of tax cuts scheduled to occur in 2004 and 2006 in order to fund "new missions," i.e., more government spending for old programs including Medicare and Head Start. The senator has given the White House a nice fat—er, big—target. Fellow Democrats, even Terry McAuliffe, are already ducking out of sight. So far, the only Democrats willing to make the case for higher taxes are Kennedy, a senator-for-life and presidential has-been, and Hillary Rodham Clinton, whose political career is likely to replicate his (going from relative of a president, to senator from a liberal state, to spokesman for a dying creed whose ambitions live on only in conservative direct-mail letters). Republicans should press their advantage—in the first instance, by forcing a vote to make the tax cuts permanent.

■ Bush made two recess appointments: Otto Reich became assistant secretary of state for the Western Hemisphere, and Eugene Scalia became the chief lawyer at the Labor Department. Liberal editorialists are reveling in what they deem Republican hypocrisy, the GOP having howled when President Clinton bypassed the Senate to make Bill Lann Lee the civil-rights chief at the Justice Department. The charge is specious. Bush used his constitutional power to make recess appointments, which expire at the end of the congressional term in which they are made. Clinton made Lee an acting assistant attorney general so that he could stay in office indefinitely—in clear violation of a federal law, the Vacancies Act, that makes 120 days the longest an acting appointee can serve. Clinton himself admitted that his move was not "entirely constitutional." If there is a parallel here, it is in the behavior of Senate Democrats in both cases. They blocked a vote on Lee because they knew they would lose, and they blocked votes on Reich and Scalia for the same reason. Any attentive comparison of the cases tells entirely in the president's favor.

■ After a year in office, the Bush administration's civil-rights record is mixed. On the debit side are rhetorical silliness on

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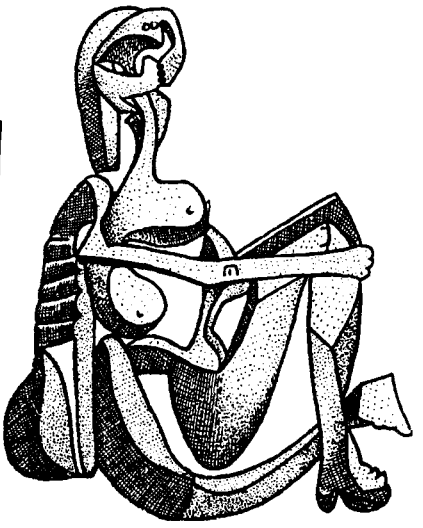
Welcome to Our New & Improved Catholic Religion



In the "Bad Old Days," We Said:	Now Supposedly Enlightened, We Say:
the House of God	worship space
St. Mary's Catholic Church	St. Mary's Catholic Community
hymn	song
Holy Sacrifice of the Mass	liturgical festivities
sacred Host	bread
precious Blood	wine
Transubstantiation	[huh?]
priest	presider or presbyter
Bishop Smith	Bishop Bob
The Holy Father	that bishop in Rome
Kingdom of God	Realm of God
Our Father in Heaven	Our Parent in heaven
"...God and His love"	"...God and God's love"
Son of God	Child of God
Our Lord Jesus Christ	the Christ figure
A.D. (*Anno Domini*)	C.E. (Common Era)
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Our Woman of Guadalupe
husband and wife	partners
shack-ups	partners
orthodoxy	fundamentalism
dissent, heresy	creative fidelity
sin	alternative lifestyles
Hell	[shhh!]
May God bless you.	Have a nice day.

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profiling and a disappointing, though perhaps defensible, decision to argue the Clinton position before the Supreme Court in the *Adarand* racial-preferences case. On the credit side is a series of notable appointments that should give conservatives hope for bolder moves in the future. These include Ralph Boyd as head of the Justice Department's civil-rights division, Charles James at the Department of Labor's compliance office, and Jennifer Braceras and Peter Kirsanow at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Gerald Reynolds, too, is a promising nominee for the civil-rights office at the Department of Education, though he remains unconfirmed. Boyd, James, Kirsanow, and Reynolds are black and Braceras is Hispanic—but more important, they are an outstanding team ready and able to execute a conservative vision on civil-rights policy. Before they can do that, though, they need help from the top.

■ New York mayor Michael Bloomberg attended a Martin Luther King Day breakfast at Al Sharpton's Harlem HQ, breaking the eight-year Sharpton freeze maintained by Rudy Giuliani. Will Bloomberg be rolled by the wily Rev. Sharpton? Maybe not—Sharpton seeks the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004, and being nice to New York's nominally Republican mayor may be one tactic he may use to torment the Democratic party. To play it safe, though, Bloomberg should avoid investigating crimes involving black girls, or selling clothes to black people when Sharpton is around. The first could get him accused of rape; the second, killed.

■ The business of screening passengers at airports has now passed beyond mere comedy into a realm of gibbering lunacy. Under the dogmatic guidance of "profiling"-obsessed transportation secretary Norman Mineta, a doctrine of *anti*-profiling seems to have taken hold, in which those passengers who are, on any commonsense grounds, the *least* likely to pose a security risk are harassed, abused, and insulted. Examples abound, but one that particularly caught our eye concerned retired Marine Corps general Joseph J. Foss, aged 86. At the airport in Phoenix, Gen. Foss was held up for 45 minutes at the airport while security officials deliberated over a potentially dangerous item he was carrying on his person. The item? A Congressional Medal of Honor, received—as is plainly stated on the obverse side of it—from President Roosevelt in 1943, for exceptional valor in the Pacific. (Gen. Foss was carrying the medal because he had recently spoken to cadets at West Point, whom he had showed the medal in order to make a point.) Does anybody think that an 86-year-old retired general and his Congressional Medal of Honor pose any threat? Well, yes—the security screeners at America West obviously think so. These nitwits—and their superiors, all the way up to Secretary Mineta—are plainly operating at levels of stupidity, incompetence, and mindless political correctness so far beyond the boundaries of reason they should not be allowed anywhere *near* an airport, nor any other place where large pieces of machinery are present.

■ At the end of last season, Marquette University killed its wrestling program in order to comply with federally mandated gender quotas. It did not matter that the program's alumni were fully funding it. This is an old story, of course, and it will be retold. Bucknell's wrestling team will be shutting down at the end of this season for similar reasons. To try to stem the tide, the National Wrestling Coaches Association has filed suit against the Department of Education, arguing that the Clinton administration wrongly interpreted the 1972 Title IX statute to mandate gender quotas. The current administration should listen to the coaches and drop the numbers game the previous White House created, which effectively discriminates against men because of their propensity to participate in sports more than women. It should return to the original law, which prohibited discrimination—even against men.

■ Robert Mugabe, the murderous dictator of Zimbabwe, makes Idi Amin look like Pericles. In 1960, prime minister Harold Macmillan made a famous "wind of change" speech, heralding decolonization. At about the same time, W. W. Rostow published the popular *Stages of Economic Growth*. Africa was supposed to be in the take-off stage. Some wind; some change. Since 1960, African reality has been discouraging, to say the least. Mugabe wins "elections" through fraud and brutality. He is expropriating white-owned farms through lawless violence and driving law-abiding white citizens into exile. He is about to win another sham election. Rhodesia looks better all the time.

■ Berlin is once again the capital of Germany, and the Communists are once again back in power in the state governing Berlin, in a coalition with the Social Democrats that has already been dubbed "Red-Red." Chancellor Gerhard Schröder isn't happy about it, and a leader of the classically liberal Free Democrats says that this event gives rise to "fears among millions of people in Germany and beyond." There's nothing much these worthies can do about it. In recent state elections, the Communists won almost a quarter of the vote, and as much as half in some districts of east Berlin. The Communists claim to be reformed, of course, which must be why they haven't formulated proposals for putting the country's 4 million unemployed to work rebuilding their greatest monument, the Berlin Wall.

■ It may be difficult for Americans to grasp, but the September 11 attacks on this country were greeted with glee by many people elsewhere in the world, who saw them as a poke in the eye for an arrogant superpower. Outside the Arab and Muslim nations, this was most obvious in China, where widespread cheering greeted the toppling of the Twin Towers, and where videos of the attacks, furnished with a gloating commentary, were selling briskly within days. At the annual ice festival in the city of Harbin, in Chinese Siberia, a popular exhibit this year has been a 40-foot ice sculpture showing the head and shoulders of Lady Liberty, mouth open in horror, hands up with palms outward to ward off some approaching plane (not included). There have been indications that the Chinese authorities may have had a hand in promoting this recent disgusting outburst of schadenfreude. Our own govern-

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ment should exert itself to find out if this is indeed the case; and, if it is, then a very strong and public protest should be made during President Bush's visit to China in February. If China wishes to be our enemy, that is something we can deal with; if she persists in claiming to want our friendship, she should be told bluntly and plainly that civilized people do not crow over the misfortunes of their friends.

■ At the beginning of January, a delegation of politicos, led by Republican senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, went down to Havana to see Castro. Nothing new there: American pols, celebrities, and sports figures are always going down to hug and be hugged by the dictator. They never cause any trouble. A columnist for the *Philadelphia Daily News* said of Castro that "his laugh broke up the room." "The conversation was spellbinding." "Castro was vibrant, animated, courteous [courteous!], fully engaged, and unflinching in his views." "He was the opposite of today's sound-bite, blow-dried politicians." It must be of great comfort to Castro's political prisoners to know that their tormentor leaves his hair natural. Of course, warm words of this type were spoken and written by gullible American visitors about Stalin. To his American friends, Castro pretended to be against terrorism, intoning that we should "attack it from a moral and ethical point of view." (His regime, of course, is on the State Department's short list of terror-sponsoring regimes.) At one point, someone in the party presented Castro with a little gift: a New York Fire Department hat. Castro duly put it on, taking advantage of the propaganda opportunity that his guests gave him. Wrote the columnist, "Castro for at least one moment looked no different from Rudy Giuliani." An old comment of Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart from Miami remains timeless: "For the life of me, I just don't know how Castro can seem cute after forty years of torturing people."

■ Chances are, you don't know her name, but if you were Cuban, you would. And if she were anything other than an anti-Communist heroine, you would. She is Maritza Lugo Fernandez, and she arrived in Miami on January 11 to a hero's welcome. She brought with her her eleven-year-old daughter—the purpose of her departure from Cuba and her new life in the United States. Lugo is an important democracy and human-rights activist, the wife and partner of Rafael Ibarra Roque, who is president of the Frank País November 30 Democratic party. Ibarra is serving a long term in one of Castro's prisons. Lugo herself has been jailed by Castro more than 20 times. She would never have left her husband or her work—and the regime was happy to see this one go—but for her daughter, who was increasingly traumatized by the frequent raids on their home and the constant threat of arrest. One of Lugo's sisters said, "[Lugo] didn't want to leave, but the government took away her food and made her life impossible. If they put her in prison again, what would happen to her daughter?" This is what Communism or fascism does: makes families impossible, makes freedom impossible, makes life impossible. Maritza Lugo has vowed to keep fighting, even from American soil. She is a name worth knowing.

■ And you thought progressive taxation was bad: In Finland, *traffic fines* are based on the driver's income. For decades, police had relied on motorists' stated income to determine fines—and for decades, motorists had lied. (One Finnish officer, quoted by the *Wall Street Journal*, called lying to cops the "national sport.") In 1999, however, a more modern system was introduced that first taps into public tax records by cellular phone, then calibrates fines with an eye to the offender's monthly income, number of dependents, net worth—and, oh yeah, speed. Among the more affluent offenders so far are Anssi Vanjoki, who was recently fined the equivalent of $103,600 for going 47 mph in a 31 mph zone—and Pekka Ala-Pietila, billed $31,200 for running a red light. Vanjoki is a director, and Ala-Pietila the president, of cellular juggernaut Nokia, whose technology helps make the instant calculation of sliding-scale fines possible. We hope these gentlemen had a chance to savor that irony before making out their checks, which in Finland are payable to the Ministry of Justice.

■ The debate about Pius XII, whom John Paul II proposes to canonize, rages on. In *The New Republic*, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen wrote an attack on Pius that was, in truth, an attack on Catholicism. He is right to say that most European Christians fell short of their duty during the Thirties and Forties; and many—from German Lutherans to Croatian Franciscans to Romanian Orthodox—committed crimes and slaughters. But the Nazis themselves knew these were weak reeds to lean on. The Nuremberg Project, an analysis by Rutgers and Cornell universities of 148 volumes of documents collected by "Wild Bill" Donovan of the O.S.S., begins with an analysis of Nazism's plans for Christianity. According to Nazi youth leader Baldur von Schirach, "the destruction of Christianity was explicitly recognized as a purpose of the National Socialist movement," though "considerations of expedience" required a "slow and cautious policy of gradual encroachment." Nazi gradualism included short-term deals, targeted arrests of brave dissidents, and gradual undermining. "The Catholic Church need not imagine that we are going to create martyrs," declared Robert Wagner, Gauleiter of Baden. "We shall not give the church that satisfaction. She shall have not martyrs, but criminals." Let it be a lesson for all in the uses of martyrdom when confronting the Devil.

■ On January 18, NBC commemorated the 25th anniversary of the miniseries *Roots*. *Roots* was a tale of the persistence of black memory, in the face of white abduction and brainwashing, that resonated powerfully with aspects of the black experience in America. Yet it was a lie, in two senses. Alex Haley's book, on which the miniseries was based, was a fraud—a made-up tale about his own family, leavened with plagiarized passages from a novel, *The African*, by Harold Courlander, a white author. White editors and producers, and the white judge in Courlander's plagiarism suit, gave Haley a free ride. (Courlander won $650,000, but was told not to discuss the case.) But now black columnist Stanley Crouch admits *Roots* was "one of the biggest con jobs in U.S. literary history." The meta-story of *Roots* was almost as fraudulent as its details. The

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black experience in this country was woven with slavery and woe. But blacks also managed to fertilize vast tracts of the American spirit; the victims of the slave trade became triumphant cultural imperialists. America is the home of American blacks, not some lost and remote Africa. No wonder that, to tell the grim story he wanted to tell, Haley had to make up almost everything.

■ Back when economist Paul Krugman was on an advisory board of Enron's, he wrote an article for *Fortune* that lauded the company—and mentioned that he was on the board, though not that he got $50,000 for his services. When he became a columnist for the *New York Times*, Krugman left the board. He now flays Enron for practicing a corrupt "crony capitalism" and the Bush administration for "dissembling" about its ties to Enron. Should the *Times* can Krugman because he lacks journalistic ethics? No. These sins—failure to disclose relevant information, hypocrisy—seem fairly petty. The *Times* should end his column for other reasons. It's repetitive and predictable: Krugman seems to have only three or four column ideas (tax cuts are bad, private accounts in Social Security are bad, Republicans are bad). It's intellectually thuggish: Krugman caricatures opponents, falsely presents his opinions as "cold, hard fact" accepted by all his fellow economists, and attributes all disagreement with him to crankiness and dishonesty. He has become, to some extent, a partisan hack, willing to make abrupt 180-degree turns if necessary to criticize President Bush. Finally, he's a mediocre writer at best, even making allowances for his being an economist. That companies like Enron go bankrupt is a sign that markets work. The canning of a lousy columnist would be another.

■ When Danny McWilliams and George Johnson, of Ladder Co. 157, and Billy Eisengrein, of Rescue 2, raised an American flag over the smoky rubble of Ground Zero, the photograph landed on front pages around the world. FDNY brass okayed a statue that would stand in front of Fire Department headquarters in Brooklyn to commemorate the deed; but instead of depicting the three (white, as it happens) firefighters, this statue would have depicted a Neapolitan-ice-cream racial mix—one white firefighter, one black one, and one Hispanic one. If you want to honor an event, do it; if you want to honor all who served and died, including black and Hispanic firefighters, design an appropriate memorial. But don't edit the past. Rank-and-file outrage, and a prudent nod by Mayor Bloomberg, have led to a redesign. "It's just disgraceful that the country should be focusing on this," McWilliams told the *New York Post*. "Guys are dying in Afghanistan, and this is what we're fighting over?" That's what racist PC does to people—it tells lies, feeds grievances in the name of assuaging them, and creates new categories of the aggrieved. The death of the fantasy statue may be the first sign of post–9/11 rollback of this pernicious tendency.

Racicot Anxiety

Marc will no longer lobby for
The firm whose brightest star
Was Enron, but will still be paid—
A straddle that goes far
Toward giving heebie-jeebies to
Those running in the fall,
Who'd much prefer the chair to smell
Like Caesar's wife, that's all.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ In the run-up to St. Valentine's Day, sappy-romance publisher Harlequin Books issued a survey purporting to prove that, among the nations of the world, Norwegians are the most prone—or, as the case may be, supine—to perform acts of sexual congress in public places (defined to mean "cars, trains, planes, beaches, parks, changing rooms, offices, and libraries"), while Canadians are the least fond of doing so. Only 17 percent of Canadians surveyed had even fantasized about having a sexual experience in public, against a global average of 35 percent. The compilers of the report suggest that there may be a connection with the reputation of Canadians for being "polite, proper, and conservative." As opposed to those riotous, sensual, and unbridled Norwegians? Well, well, we shall just take it as another reason to cherish kindly, mildly patronizing feelings towards the Friendly Giant to Our North . . . though we confess to being a little chagrined by that linkage with "conservative."

■ A Unitarian Fellowship in Houston promised to extend a welcome to members of all religious beliefs. The trusting Mary LeBlanc of that city accordingly joined up, attracted by the Fellowship's premises: "It's a beautiful church, lots of glass, and it looks out on trees and a garden." Mary, however, is a witch; and when her fellow Fellows discovered this, it was Salem time for poor Mary. Numberless indignities were forced on her. Unitarians came to her home to infiltrate Wiccan meetings; others wanted her to reveal Wiccan secrets; she was pressed to form a feminist women's group; and at last, having resisted all these outrages, she was dismissed as "a hunchbacked, toothless, redneck, hillbilly witch." LeBlanc has now taken to the law, claiming $3 million in damages for her hurt feelings. Wouldn't it, we can't help wondering, have been more efficacious to just turn her tormentors into beetles and frogs?

■ Last August, Hamas operative Muhammad Abu Wardeh was quoted on 60 *Minutes* as saying that God rewards martyrs in jihad with "70 virgins, 70 wives, and everlasting happiness." (The number more typically cited is 72.) But if the work of scholar Christoph Luxenberg proves correct, Abu Wardeh's recruits may be in for a surprise. According to the London *Guardian*, Luxenberg's book claims that "many obscurities of the Koran disappear if we read certain words as being Syriac and not Arabic." His analysis replaces "doe-

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eyed, and ever willing virgins" with "'white raisins' of 'crystal clarity.'" Luxenberg's book, published in 2000, has been hailed by scholars at Yale and Princeton. If true, it settles centuries-old linguistic controversies and could revolutionize Koranic scholarship. As for the prospect of the September 11 terrorists spending eternity with a box of Sun-Maids—well, that's just gravy.

■ With the death of Cyrus Vance, age 84, another straggler of the WASP ascendancy enrolls in the Social Register of Heaven. Vance was born into a well-connected West Virginia family; his first cousin, John W. Davis, was a Wall Street lawyer and 1924 Democratic presidential candidate. The Kent School, Yale, Yale Law, and the Navy followed. From the late Fifties, when he served as counsel to a subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, to the early Nineties, when he tried to broker cease-fires in Bosnia and Croatia, Vance was on permanent call as a public servant. The quality of his service is another matter. Vance famously resigned his position as Jimmy Carter's secretary of state on a matter of principle—but the principle (that Carter was getting too tough on Iran, which had kidnapped an embassyful of our diplomats) was wrong. WASP secretaries of state were once vigorous men like John Quincy Adams and John Hay. The vigor died out. R.I.P.

■ The man who gave us the word "meritocracy" died on January 14 in London. Michael Young's 1958 novel *The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870–2033* portrayed a society in which the older kinds of social privilege had been abolished by a regime of scrupulously impartial academic testing. The result was a cognitive elite of arrogant, amoral careerists, who eventually faced the wrath of the low-IQ masses. "Meritocracy" was thus, as Young had to keep pointing out, intended as a *negative* term. Young himself was actually an old-fashioned communitarian socialist who was temperamentally opposed to most forms of competition, including academic testing. Now, you don't have to like Young's woolly, idealistic kind of leftism, but it should at least be acknowledged that he brought to the fore one of the great social issues of our time: How can matters be so arranged that people in the left-hand tail of the bell curve have a fair shot at satisfying and useful lives? The answer currently popular in the United States is: Pretend that everyone is just as smart as everyone else. Send dim people to dumbed-down colleges to study bogus subjects and acquire worthless degrees, while a meritocratic elite of test-passers colonizes the *real* commanding heights of our society. To those of us to whom this kind of educational "policy" seems dishonest, cruel, and antisocial, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* still has something to say. R.I.P.

■ By way of illustrating our editors' tireless efforts to gather news from the remotest parts of the planet, and in the hope of bringing a winning entry to the attention of the biennial "Darwin Awards" committee (said awards being issued to "commemorate those who improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it in really stupid ways"), we offer the following headline from the Cambodian press: "They Used an Artillery Shell to Cook Toads: Two Dead." Apparently, the subjects of the story built a fireplace, with a 105mm artillery round as one side of the thing, then used the arrangement to boil toads for a traditional medicine. After four days of doing this, the round was "done". . . and so were the pharmaceutical entrepreneurs. Children, please do *not* try this at home.

POLITICS

Exorcising Enron

THE Enron debacle is the nation's most famous business failure not just because it happened suddenly, amid a thunderclap of revelations about misstated profits and possible criminality, but also because it offers the tantalizing prospect of a Bush scandal. So far the expectation has been unrealized, as the company's SOS calls to Washington were met with the proverbial "drop dead" from Bush officials. Although Democrats can't quite decide whether the scandal is that Bush officials gave Enron special favors or that they gave it this death-bed cold shoulder (or maybe a little of both, depending on the day), the Enron disaster will linger for months.

The administration had better get used to it. So far it has demonstrated the self-righteous defensiveness that often characterizes the Bush operation's dealings with the press. Two years ago, the Bush campaign refused to answer questions about any possible drug use in Bush's past. It argued that it wasn't going to play the scandal game—and it weathered the media storm just fine, but took a hit in the campaign's final days when Bush's never-disclosed DUI arrest surfaced. The approach of the Bush White House now is almost exactly parallel, with the difference that Enron is inarguably an appropriate matter of public scrutiny.

The administration is not resisting congressional investigators solely because of its stiff neck. It has a legitimate interest in preserving its right to keep some of its internal deliberations secret. But the best way to do so may be to reveal as much information as possible while continuing to deny any legal obligation to do so. In particular, the administration should disclose information about the Cheney energy task force and about Enron contacts with administration officials. The administration appears to be beyond reproach in this matter. It should do itself the favor of acting like it.

For conservatives, Bush's political interest in the Enron scandal should be secondary to resisting the inevitable rush of foolish regulations. Enron's collapse is, as the Bush administration says, a triumph of capitalism, in the sense that only in the free-market system is such a mismanaged but politically connected firm allowed to fail. But a functioning market also depends on a level of transparency that was absent in the case of Enron. Accounting and securities rules should be reviewed, while keeping in mind that a huge net of regulations already enmeshes companies like Enron. No government rule could have saved Enron from its own fundamental folly: making the wrong bets in the energy and tech markets.

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Liberals are nonetheless arguing that new regulations are necessary for 401(k)s, limiting how much company stock a employee can hold (never mind that one sponsor of this legislation, Sen. Jon Corzine, became a multi-millionaire by investing heavily in Goldman Sachs stock when he worked there) and discouraging companies from giving their employees stock. This plan, as Richard Nadler points out in this issue (page 19), is a gratuitous shot at the 401(k)s that have made it possible for workers to save and invest for their retirement without relying wholly on their employers or the government. Most employees already understand the importance of diversifying their portfolio, and the Enron controversy will only re-emphasize the point.

There will be attempts to roll back the partial deregulation of electricity that occurred at the state level during the Clinton years, even though it has been successful at delivering cheaper energy. The campaign-finance system will come under renewed assault, although all of Enron's spending seems to have gotten it nothing untoward. (Sometimes it prevailed in Washington, sometimes not, generally depending on the ideological preferences of policymakers.) Finally, since Enron avoided paying federal taxes in recent years, there will be a renewed push to pile on new corporate taxes, although it should now be clear that thriving, profitable businesses are *good* for the little guy. It's corporations that go out of business that create aggrieved former employees and shareholders.

If the administration provides full disclosure, criticizes and prosecutes any lawbreaking that has occurred, and stands for carefully designed reform where necessary, neither partisan nor ideological opportunists will be able to feast on Enron's carcass.

AL-QAEDA

Antisocial X-Rays

THE European elite has finally objected to the treatment of prisoners in Cuba. Of course, it's not the political prisoners tortured by Fidel Castro, but the captured Taliban and al-Qaeda terrorists held in Guantanamo Bay by the U.S. who are the objects of their solicitude.

By any reasonable standard, the prisoners there are being treated humanely, especially given the temporary nature of the facility and the dangerousness of the detainees. They are receiving food, shelter, and even copies of the Koran. But the stringent security measures—the see-through cages, the hoods when in transit—are necessary. For these prisoners, every surrender is a possible prelude to a prison riot, every visit to a hospital a possible set-up to a suicide attack.

That's because these detainees aren't soldiers, but part of a murderous gang that exists outside all civilized strictures. The Geneva Convention does not apply to al-Qaeda members, since they did not, as required by the convention to qualify for its protections, wear proper uniforms, answer to a responsible chain of command, and abide by the rules of war (or sign the treaty, for that matter). They are war criminals. Now, the administration has yet to say clearly whether it considers Taliban as well as al-Qaeda prisoners unlawful combatants. If it does not, it is obliged to hold hearings to sort out the legitimate prisoners of war.

The conditions of Camp X-Ray are not meant as a de facto punishment; the camp should be a temporary expedient for penning the prisoners up until they can be dealt with appropriately, which for the unlawful combatants means a trial before a military tribunal followed by either a swift execution or long-term imprisonment. One reason that critics want the administration to agree that the Geneva Convention applies to all Guantanamo prisoners is that it would afford them the same legal rights that apply to U.S. soldiers and thus let them circumvent the military tribunals. But the fact that the al-Qaeda detainees need to be tried at all should point out the absurdity of considering them POWs; real POWs aren't tried, but simply held and released at the end of the conflict.

To obscure these distinctions is to blur the difference between civilization and barbarity. Members of al-Qaeda chose the latter, and we have no obligation to protect them from the consequences of that choice.

CULTURE WATCH

Telling Stories

ALL over academe, the spouses (or sexual partners) of sociologists, econometricians, and queer theorists must be asking their mates over the breakfast table, "Why can't you get in the paper, like the historians?"

Not that the historians have been getting *good* publicity. Most recently, Fred Barnes of *The Weekly Standard* found that sentences in Stephen Ambrose's book *The Wild Blue*, on World War II pilots, had been lifted from an earlier book by another writer. People combing through Ambrose's other volumes found similar plagiarizing (Ambrose footnoted his sources, but did not put quotation marks around the material he took). Earlier, David McCullough conflated two famous lines—Richard Stockton describing John Adams as "the Atlas of Independence" at the Continental Congress, and Thomas Jefferson calling him "our colossus on the floor"—and made them, as "The Colossus of Independence," into a chapter title of his book *John Adams*. No one has found a flaw in the works of Joseph J. Ellis, but he admitted telling journalists and his classes at Mount Holyoke that he was a Vietnam vet, when in fact all his Army service was stateside.

The historians in the spotlight have certain similarities. They are all enormously popular; their books stay on the best-seller lists for months, and Ambrose's have been made into movies and TV shows. Their view of their subjects is often affirmative: Ellis has problems with Thomas Jefferson, but he and McCullough have made John Adams a hero, while Stephen Ambrose helped spark the World War II revival of the last few years.

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Their attackers are also similar. The first strikes are done by journalists eager for a good story. But, when one follows the ensuing controversies carefully, one can spot the Greek chorus of envious academics, often of the Left. Sean Wilentz of Princeton was McCullough's primary assailant.

How did Ambrose et al. become popular in the first place? Great writers have often turned to history (Washington Irving), and great historians have often written well (Samuel Eliot Morison). In recent decades, however, the discipline has been dominated by impersonalist paradigms. One historian in an Updike novel specializes in the history of the Post Office in the mid 19th century, analyzing its institutional continuity. He ignores the Civil War, of course. Such approaches—either sweepingly general, or finically small-bore—generally serve a vaguely Marxist agenda, presenting history's sweep as inevitable, and its actors as trivial, when they are not vicious.

But history is comprehensible only as a story. That is how we experience our own lives, and that is how we draw lessons from the experience of others. The popular historians, for all their occasional shortcomings, fill a need, which is why their colleagues—who have their own, implicit message, though they do not tell it so well—resent them.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: In a recent column, you wrote: "The Taliban has taken unmarried women detected in pregnancy and buried them to neck level before execution." Your sentence reminded me of an unrelated problem with English.

To mean "unmarried pregnant women," why is English so infecund as to need three words? You appear to have grappled with "unmarried pregnant women" before conceiving five words, "unmarried women detected in pregnancy," as if you could avoid propagating adjectives by begetting precision.

In the weaker sex of both genders, you may have created righteousness for unmarried women detected in pregnancy, illegitimacy for unmarried women detected as pregnant, and pariahdom for unmarried pregnant women.

James V. Stallings
Sikeston, Mo.

Dear Mr. Stallings: Why should you *not* need three words to designate three conditions (one of them an attribute)? 1) It is a she; 2) She is unmarried; 3) She is pregnant. Now if she is ostracized, that is the activity of others, she being the object of the ostracism. The weakness of the sex implies nothing, unless you want to get into the unostracizeability of pregnant men, and that ends you up with pregnant men in your calculations.

I would give up, if I were you. I do.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: William Dornburgh asked (Dec. 17), "If Arabs are Semites, why is the term 'anti-Semitism' applicable only to Jews?" Your reply, "Just usage," is wrong.

Wilhelm Marr coined the term "anti-Semitism" in Germany in 1879 to give traditional anti-Jewish bigotry a more "scientific"-sounding, and therefore more acceptable, name. In origin and subsequent usage, it had and has nothing to do with Arabs.

The term Semite was introduced, also in Germany, a century earlier, to identify a family of related languages—Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, and others—not a people. The scholar A. L. von Schlozer derived it from the Biblical Shem, one of Noah's sons. Genetic testing indicates that Jews in general and Israelis in particular share a common ancestry with Syrian and Palestinian Arabs. But by conquest, forced marriage, and minority-to-majority assimilation, the direction has been one-way: Many non-Jews in today's Middle East have Jewish ancestors; few Jews have Arab progenitors. Historically, religiously, socially, and culturally, Arabs and Jews are not the same people.

At the anti-Israel, anti-American hate fest known as the U.N. World Conference Against Racism in Durban last year, Arab-Islamic delegates attempted to diminish the impact of the term "antisemitism" (since there is no "Semitism," the hyphen and capital are misleading) by redefining it to include alleged "Zionist anti-Arabism."

Just usage, indeed!

Sincerely,
Eric L. Rozenman
Fairfax, Va.

Dear Mr. Rozenman: Very interesting, and many thanks. But what does it have to do with usage?

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Mr. Joe Kunkel (Dec. 3) suggests we give a portion of California to the Israelis for their New Israel in order to end the squabbling in the Middle East.

A great idea, but he thinks small. I say, let's give them *all* of California, even put up a sort of Chinese Great Wall along the borders. That would end much of the squabbling, both in the Middle East and in our own country, and raise the collective IQ of our remaining 49 states as well. And rather than Santa Barbara for the New Jerusalem, I suggest Berkeley or Hollywood. If this works, we could request the U.N. to move its headquarters to our former West Coast. We could subsidize the moving costs through voluntary fund-raising in the remaining states. Hell, North Carolina alone would likely raise 50 percent of the money.

T. R. Busard
Bradenton, Fla.

—WFB

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■ THE WORLD ■

Under Foreign Flags

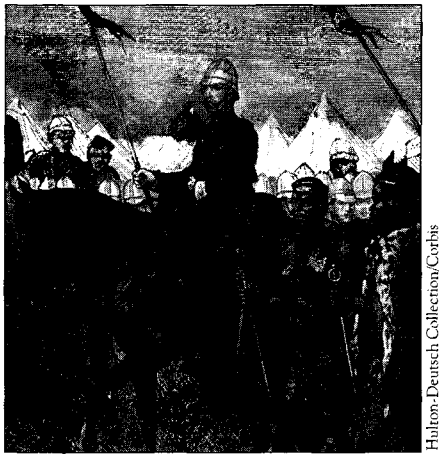
The glories and agonies of colonialism

PAUL JOHNSON

THE question of colonialism has come up again: How did it fare? What were its advantages and disadvantages? And is there a role for it in the future, or now?

The European colonial empires endured half a millennium, embraced a huge variety of forms, and produced results ranging from excellent to disastrous. At the better end of the spectrum were colonies in which the indigenous inhabitants were effectively replaced and the territory became a racial and cultural clone of the mother country. Such were the first, the Portuguese and Spanish Atlantic colonies of Madeira, the Canaries, and the Azores. Iberian colonies in Central and South America, all of which got independence early in the 19th century (Cuba excepted), have had mixed fortunes. Brazil, the best endowed by nature, with a mixed-race population second only in variety to the United States, has been disappointing its admirers and boosters for over a century. Argentina, the world's eighth richest country in the 1930s, was wrecked by Peronism and has been economically and politically unstable for half a century. Cuba, once the second richest in Latin America as a U.S. appendage, is now, after 40 years of Communism, the poorest. The richest Latino state today is Chile, thanks to the Pinochet dictatorship, which followed Chicago-school economic policies, and itself reflects the substantial German, French, Scots, and English elements in the population. A separate group is formed by black former slave colonies, mainly British, in the Caribbean-Atlantic area. The most successful is Bermuda, with a 50 percent white, 50 percent non-white mix; also

Mr. Johnson is a journalist and historian whose many books include *Modern Times: A History of the World from the Twenties to the Eighties.*



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successful are Trinidad, with a large Indian element, which produced the latest Nobel Prize winner for literature, V. S. Naipaul, and black tourist centers like the Bahamas and Barbados.

The most successful colonies in the Americas were the Thirteen States set up by Britain from the early 17th century, which achieved independence as the United States in the 1780s. They enjoyed a measure of constitutional self-government and economic freedom from the start, but their subsequent enormous wealth was the result of three factors: 1) access to almost unlimited quantities of good land on easy terms; 2) a free-market legal structure created by the outstanding early-19th-century chief justice John Marshall; and 3) unlimited immigration until the second decade of the 20th century. But the roots of all three were planted in the colonial period. Moreover, the U.S.A. was only the outstanding example of a group of white, English-speaking colonies which include Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. All four have developed successful democracies and retain the rule of law, and all are high on the list of the world's richest states. South Africa might have joined this group, and indeed developed the world's most advanced mining industry. But it attracted more immigrants from black Africa than from white Europe, and now hovers uneasily between the First and Third worlds, with a sinking currency and an uncertain future.

In Asia, colonies divide into three groups. First are the Siberian and Central Asian colonies of Russia, acquired from the 16th century onwards. These must be judged failures, from an economic, constitutional, and cultural point of view. Joined to them is the Chinese colony of Tibet, another failure and a tragedy too. In all, natural resources have been inefficiently extracted or squandered, and permanent ecological damage inflicted on an enormous scale.

A second group constituted the British Indian empire, into which Portuguese, Dutch, and French enclaves in the Indian subcontinent (Pondicherry, Goa, etc.) were incorporated. Broken up, unwisely, in 1947–8, this group has met mixed fortunes. Moslem Pakistan split again into Pakistan proper and Bangladesh, and both remain extremely poor and politically fragile. Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) has seemingly insuperable racial problems, and Burma has reverted to its pre-colonial past as a military despotism. On the other hand, India, now with over a billion inhabitants, has managed to preserve its British inheritance as the world's largest democracy, where the rule of law is still upheld. China, which was an economic (not a political) colony of the European powers, plus the United States, in the 19th century, lacks both democracy and the rule of law, but currently has the world's largest growth rate. But this is a temporary or transient phase, likely to end either in democratization or economic recession. The likelihood is that, by the end of the 21st century, India will be the larger power, both economically and demographically.

There is a third group of states, effectively created from nothing by the colonizing process. The outstanding examples are Singapore and Hong Kong, which suggest that Chinese communities can prosper exceedingly when they enjoy the rule of law and economic freedom (Hong Kong's future now being subsumed in that of China). Their example has been followed successfully by South Korea (once a Japanese colony) and, to a lesser degree, by the former Dutch and

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British colonies of Southeast Asia, led by Indonesia and Malaysia, the former American colony of the Philippines, and Thailand, a British economic colony. The former French colony of Indochina (Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) is slowly emerging from a disastrous war with growing success, thanks to the colonial infrastructure. But it is still true that Asians flourish better as immigrants than as natives. Witness the success of the Chinese in Canada, and the Vietnamese and South Koreans in the United States.

In Africa, the methods pursued by the colonial powers varied and the results have been so mixed as almost to defy generalization. Up to about 1960, progress was rapid in some countries. Algeria, incorporated into metropolitan France, was approaching European levels in some respects. Nigeria, over which the British took more trouble than with any other colony, was to be a model black state, underwritten by copious oil reserves. The Sudan, an Anglo-Egyptian condominium, had perhaps the most enlightened and dedicated (though tiny) colonial civil service of all, and its future emergence from poverty seemed assured. But under independence, all came crashing down in hopeless ruin, thanks to civil and religious war, corruption, and/or Moslem fundamentalism. Of the more than 50 independent states that emerged in Africa from the colonial period, most are now tyrannies of one kind or another, nearly all have had their per capita income slashed, and some, like the former Italian Somaliland, are written off as "failed states," where terrorism flourishes. Countries like the former Rhodesias and Nyasaland, Uganda and Kenya, once categorized as "paradises" or "Gardens of Eden," are now increasingly poor and dangerous. The former Italian, Belgian, and Portuguese territories have fared the worst and are probably the poorest. But in any case, French and British former colonies have fared little better. Morocco and Tunisia have done better than Algeria, Egypt better than Libya. Black majority rule has failed virtually everywhere (Bechuanaland, or Botswana, is an exception), and it is now clear that independence came a generation, or perhaps two, too soon. Rapid population growth, indebtedness, and scourges like AIDS have brought additional misery, but the main failure has been political. Very little can be done to help these African states until they first provide themselves with responsible, representative, honest, and efficient governments. But the likelihood of that happening, at present, is not great.

Is there then a case for a reversion to colonialism? There may be such a case, in certain extreme examples, such as Somalia. But colonialism is not the kind of condition that can be artificially restored. It was initially an economic process, in which individual traders sought to do business, exchanging wares (in which, in Africa, slavery often played a part). The building of forts, the assumption of administration and sovereignty, and its extension inward, followed in an attempt to provide the security in which commerce could be safely conducted. These conditions cannot be recreated. Few African countries today offer the economic rewards that once justified the process, and these rewards can usually be secured by means other than occupation. The European "merchant adventurers" who spearheaded colonialism no longer exist.

On the other hand, the League of Nations mandate system which, after the First World War, reapportioned the elements of the defeated German and Turkish empires among the victorious powers, Britain, France, the United States, and Japan, does provide a relevant and workable precedent. The procedure would be as follows. The U.N. Security Council would vote to declare a territory, such as Somalia, where government no longer exists and international terrorists flourish, a "failed state" and direct one of its members to exercise sovereignty there until such time as it became possible to create an effective government from the local population.

Whether leading countries, such as the U.S., Britain, and France, would be prepared to take on such a responsibility remains to be seen. The cost would be great, and one cannot easily see the U.N. meeting the bill. Nor can one see organizations like NATO or the European Union willingly taking on the duty. But the proposal is certainly worth discussing, and may become urgent when Somalia, and perhaps Sudan too, are seen to require a change from their present anarchy, if international terrorism is to be vanquished. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY** ■

The State of Welfare

An old and tricky question resurfaces

KATE O'BEIRNE

THIS year, Congress must reauthorize the welfare reforms that President Clinton so reluctantly signed in 1996. Disaffected liberals are using this as an opportunity for a dramatic overhaul of that dramatic overhaul, while conservatives hope to push for tougher reforms on top of those tough reforms. President Bush's national victory lap with Sen. Ted Kennedy to celebrate their collaboration on education reform prompted nervous conservatives to wonder whether there will be a similar duet extolling bipartisan welfare reform.

"It's not yet clear how compassionate conservatism differs from [Ted] Kennedy liberalism on welfare issues," says Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation. Rector points to the increases that Bush proposed in his first budget for a host of social-welfare programs, including after-school day care, Head Start, and the Senior Corps. In recent days, the White House has been trumpeting similar increases in *this* year's budget proposal. Among what the *Washington Post* called "nuggets of good news" are an increase of $364 million for the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program and a $73 million expansion of the Job Corps. Rector's beef is that these spending increases aren't accompanied by any conservative reforms. "The reason so many mothers and children are in need of food assistance is that over a million children a year are born out of wedlock," he says. And the federal Job Corps program doesn't appear to meet the Bush standard of investing in programs with successful track records: One study frequently cited by conservative critics found that the Job Corps

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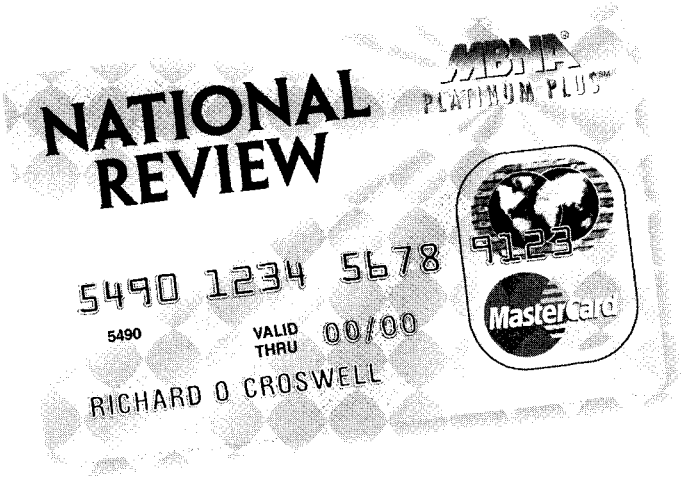

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program boosted its participants' wages by 60 cents an hour—at a cost of $20,000 a head.

What the Bush administration should be doing is trumpeting the compassionate results of the GOP-designed welfare reform, which was based on the conviction that destructive federal welfare policies discouraged work and subsidized illegitimacy. In 1996, Congress replaced the failed entitlement program of Aid to Families with Dependent Children with a new fixed-grant program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Work requirements were imposed, along with a lifetime limit of five years' assistance. Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, predicted that the changes would "impoverish millions of American children" and "leave a moral blot on [Clinton's] presidency." Then-Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan called it "the most brutal act of social policy we have known since Reconstruction"—but the 1996 reforms have in fact dramatically improved the lives of poor children.

Since 1996, welfare rolls have been reduced by over 50 percent. There are 4.2 million fewer people in poverty, including 2.3 million fewer children. The poverty rate for black children is at the lowest point in history, as is the poverty rate for single mothers. According to the Department of Agriculture, there are 2 million fewer hungry children today than in 1996, and, after steadily increasing for a generation, the illegitimate-birth rate hasn't risen in the past five years.

In the coming round of reform, conservatives are determined to build on the success of the 1996 reforms with more of the same. Robert Rector argues that current federal work requirements should be strengthened so that all able-bodied recipients are being trained, working, looking for work, or performing community service. The conservatives on the House Republican Study Committee would like to see the work requirements that now apply to cash assistance extended to food stamps and public housing. And conservative reformers point out that a key goal of the 1996 reform, reducing illegitimacy and boosting marriage, has been virtually ignored by the states, which are responsible for administering welfare programs. The data show that states have spent $1,000 subsidizing single parents for every $1 promoting marriage.

Congressional liberals are equally determined to move reform in the opposite direction. This past year, when Democratic congressman Charles Rangel of New York argued that an eight-hour-a-*month* community-service requirement for public-housing tenants should be repealed, the Republican House complied. Rangel wrongly

Tim Sloan/Agence France Presse

More duets ahead?

asserted that the Bush administration didn't object, but his amendment *was* supported by the GOP housing-appropriations subcommittee. The modest requirement, initially proposed by President Clinton, exempted the elderly, the disabled, the employed, and those involved in school, training, or welfare-reform activities. Still, Rangel objected to "the indignity of putting this type of burden on poor folks in public housing."

According to Bush administration sources, there are no current plans to attempt to restore the two-hours-a-week work requirement, which dismays conservatives. Critics see a similarly disappointing retreat on work requirements in the administration's proposal to restore food-stamp eligibility for non-citizens. At an estimated cost of $2.1 billion over the next ten years, Bush proposes to reduce the period before legal immigrants are eligible for food stamps from the ten years prescribed in the 1996 reform to five years. Cecilia Muñoz of La Raza praised the liberalization because, she said, "it is unreasonable for somebody who works hard and is laid off to have no access to food for his family." Many conservatives would agree, but the Bush proposal also eliminates the requirement that immigrants must have worked for some period before qualifying for this federal benefit.

An administration official explains that the five-year eligibility period for food stamps brings that program in accord with the TANF requirements, and addresses the concern that children who are themselves eligible citizens haven't been receiving this nutritional benefit.

In marked contrast to their problems on the issue of education, Republicans have traditionally enjoyed a political advantage on welfare reform. And polling expert Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute says she was struck by voters' strong views about reform in a 1999 *Los Angeles Times* poll: When voters were asked how a presidential candidate's views on a range of issues would affect their support, voters responded most negatively to a candidate who opposed welfare reform.

While conservatives hope to persuade the administration to press for additional reforms that encourage work and emphasize the importance of marriage, building on the impressive results of the 1996 law, Hill Democrats want to replicate Charlie Rangel's success. Connecticut senator Christopher Dodd's "Leave No Child Behind" bill, cosponsored by Sens. Kennedy, Clinton, and Wellstone, waters down the 1996 law's work requirements and time limits and includes 32 additional "acts" that increase Washington's responsibility for the well-being of kids.

"Republican members have been reelected on their record of eliminating deficits and reforming welfare," says a top GOP aide who dreads losing both issues. He continues: "Without a clear conservative vision, the administration will wind up compromising from the status quo." Teddy Kennedy, welfare reformer? **NR**

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■ PUBLIC POLICY II ■

I'm Okay, Your 401(k)

The battle over savings and investment

RICHARD NADLER

In the wake of Enron's collapse, pundits who formerly defined retirement security as a single underfunded plan (Social Security) locked into a single major asset category (U.S. Treasuries) have suddenly discovered "sound investment principles."

Enron employees saw the value of their company stock depreciate from a high of $90 to a low of $0.26. Clearly, some financial counseling is in order—and Democrats are lining up to give it. Among those singing the "Song of the Portfolio Diversified" is Sen. Barbara Boxer, Democrat of California. "I believe," she said, "that the only way we can protect working people from losing their life savings in the course of an individual company bankruptcy is to make sure that workers are not disproportionately invested in any one company."

Of course, to deduce that company-stock ownership caused these thousands of investor calamities is to overlook a few other problems at Enron: earnings overstated by $580 million, a palimpsest of shredded financial documents, and officers who misrepresented the troubled stock's value even as they unloaded it. But never mind: Boxer and her New Jersey colleague Jon Corzine have proposed a bill limiting how much company stock several popular work-based investment plans can hold.

But the decisions of companies to offer their stock in work-based plans, and of their employees to participate in these plans, are neither diabolical nor irrational. There are three major ways in which firms sell their securities to employees: defined-contribution plans, employee-stock-ownership plans, and broad-based stock options. Each strategy meets particular investment objectives of employers as well as savings objectives of employees. Participants in none of these strategies will benefit from the changes contemplated in the Boxer bill; some, in fact, may suffer because of them.

Defined-contribution (DC) plans, such as 401(k)s, are the primary target of the Boxer reforms. Fifty-five million Americans own retirement accounts in these tax-sheltered vehicles. Enron's contributions to these employee accounts consisted of company stock, but the workers' own contributions were not so restricted: They could invest in diversified, professionally managed mutual funds. But many, blinded by the company's meteoric rise, chose the company-stock fund. And there was nothing generically foolish in their preference for the stock of a blue-chip employer. Company-stock funds are, however, a rapidly shrinking orb within the DC firmament. Most 401(k)s are marketed as offering choices; the typical DC plan now offers a worker ten investment options, covering both his own contribution and his employer's.

■

To the extent that some 401(k)s still have too much company stock, the Boxer bill isn't the cure.

■

Democratic economist Paul Krugman claims that "workers across the country have been cajoled or coerced into holding a high proportion of their retirement assets in their employers' own stock," but the facts do not support this assertion. A 2001 survey by the Profit Sharing/401(k) Council of America found that 78 percent of DC companies offered no investment advice at all; the most common explanation, voiced by 72 percent of employers, was their "fiduciary concern about liability for advice that results in a loss, even if the advisor is competent and there is no conflict of interest."

The ostensible goal of the Boxer regulatory scheme is to ensure that employees hold diversified portfolios, but they already do: As firms compete for employees, they diversify their plans. They offer company-stock funds less frequently than actively managed equity and bond funds, money-market accounts, and stable-value funds. The share of company-stock funds within DC plans is also decreasing: Only 1 percent of 401(k) employers offer them at all.

But to the extent that some 401(k)s still have too much company stock, the Boxer bill isn't the cure. *Newsweek*'s investment columnist, Jane Bryant Quinn, understands this: "It's not enough to reform only 401(k)s. Companies can readily switch the matching-stock portion of a 401(k) into something called an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP)."

As their name implies, ESOPs are not retirement accounts. Rather, they are designed to provide employees an ownership share in their workplace. Legislation supporting ESOPs was enacted by Congress in the 1970s, with bipartisan support. The ESOP backers had an ambitious agenda: They wanted to transform corporate culture by mediating the interests of capital and labor through shared equity and shared management. The employee-owner, they hypothesized, would be more productive, loyal, and innovative than the alienated proletarian.

Two decades of research on ESOPs by Douglas Kruse and Joseph Blasi of Rutgers have largely confirmed this sunny thesis. By measures as diverse as output per employee, annual sales growth, stock-price changes, and worker satisfaction, ESOPs have been a rousing success. Currently, 8.5 million workers are enrolled in ESOPs. Firms whose employees own over half their equity include such giants as United Airlines and Publix Supermarkets. More commonly, ESOP companies are small; 95 percent of them are privately held. They dot the entire business landscape, from engineering to construction, from fast foods to metal fabrication.

Employee accounts in ESOPs are regularly "locked out" (to use our post-Enron parlance): An ESOP worker typically cannot sell company stock—his sole plan option—until age 55, and after a ten-year vesting period. These rules are crucial to Congress's intent, namely

Mr. Nadler is editor of *K.C. Jones*, a midwestern journal of politics and opinion.

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worker ownership. Under federal law, owners of privately held businesses receive substantial tax incentives to sell their stock to their employees when they retire. In the meantime, the ESOP trust serves as collateral against which business capital can be raised for acquisitions and expansions.

The same undiversified pool of company stock that makes ESOPs a superb vehicle for employee ownership renders them poor retirement investments. Company owners recognize this deficiency. That's why ESOP firms regularly feature a menu of benefits: Thirty-three percent offer other forms of profit-sharing; 20 percent offer defined-benefit pensions; and 33 percent offer 401(k)s. ESOP employees consistently own more total retirement assets than their non-ESOP peers.

■

Stock options are a key to the dynamism of American capitalism.

■

The proposed Boxer reforms treat ESOPs as though the companies and employees who opt for such plans were simply foolish and irrational. They would slash the age at which a worker may sell company stock by some 20 years, and cut employee vesting requirements by half. ESOPs modified in this way would still provide a retirement-planning framework inferior to DC plans—but they would also become relatively ineffective tools for employees hoping to own their workplace, and employers hoping to retire on advantageous tax terms. "Congress has a clear policy of encouraging employees to hold an equity position in their employer," said David Wray, president of the Profit Sharing/401(k) Council of America. The Boxer reforms strike at the heart of this concept.

The Boxer bill also makes no attempt to regulate the third method by which employees acquire company stock—although it is unquestionably the riskiest. Broad-based stock options allow more than half a firm's employees to buy company equities at a fixed price within a specified time window. According to the National Center for Employee Ownership (NCEO), between 8 and 10 million employees held unexercised stock options in 2001.

These options are a key to the dynamism of American capitalism. Though it is the role of stock options in venture-capital start-ups that fills our imaginations and the pages of our business journals, they are as common among firms old and large as among those young and small. Stock options enable cash-starved entrepreneurs with bright ideas to "borrow" against future capital to pay first-rate specialists in the here-and-now. Among technology start-ups, according to a recent study by Advanced-HR, Inc., software programmers regularly get four times the options allotted to administrators. "The practice of granting options broadly in venture-backed, closely held companies . . . is clearly now an institutionalized part of compensation," says an NCEO study. "These venture-backed companies have a much more dramatic impact on technological innovation and corporate culture than their numbers alone suggest. Among their ranks, after all, are the next Microsofts and Intels."

Failure is more common: the upstart manufacturer litigated into ruin; the medical innovator starved with patents pending; the dot-com sales scheme hurtling toward bankruptcy. Stock options cycle our best and brightest toward entrepreneurship. Our economy's success is built on their willingness to risk failure. And their numbers—successes as well as failures—dwarf Enron.

The Clinton administration made a brief attempt to restrain stock options through taxation. It was furiously resisted by a united technology sector. Sen. Boxer wisely declined to duplicate that effort, preferring to fight economic growth at its margins rather than its vital core. Her proposed reforms are, however, worthless: futile and unnecessary with regard to defined contribution plans, destructive toward ESOPs, and nonexistent (thankfully) in regulating stock options. At first blush, they appear to give greater rights to worker-investors; but in fact, they needlessly constrict the range of work-based savings options available to employers and employees alike. These "reforms" cannot cure a problem that doesn't exist. But they can erode capital efficiency in the attempt. **NR**

■ **POLITICS** ■

Right Rumbles

Conservatism recovers its nerve

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

WHEN George W. Bush became president, he was simultaneously celebrated as the lone star of conservatism in the Western world. Almost everywhere else—notably in the four major European countries of France, Britain, Germany, and Italy—the social-democratic Left was in power, apparently having established itself as a compassionate administrator of market capitalism. And that looked likely to be a permanent state of affairs because of the disarray of conservatives, who were either split into warring factions, as in Italy and Germany, or floundering about in search of issues, as in Britain. By comparison, the Bush GOP, buoyant from its victory, looked a very plausible candidate for the wave of the future; foreign conservatives were looking to Dubya to learn how to get back into power.

Much has changed in the last year, in particular on September 11, and the president is generally thought to be a more impressive leader than he was a year ago. His handling of the war on terrorism earns him almost universally high marks. Even so, the gap in political stature and prospects between him and overseas conservative leaders—and between their parties and the GOP—has narrowed significantly. And the main reason for this is the revival of conservatism in the advanced world.

This revival is seen most plainly in election results. In the last year, conservative parties have held or regained power in Italy, Australia, and Denmark. In each case, the result was remarkable. Australia's John Howard substantially increased his coalition's majority in an election that had been generally forecast, only two months earlier, to yield a Labour landslide. He achieved this in part because the economy was gradually improving, but mainly because he de-

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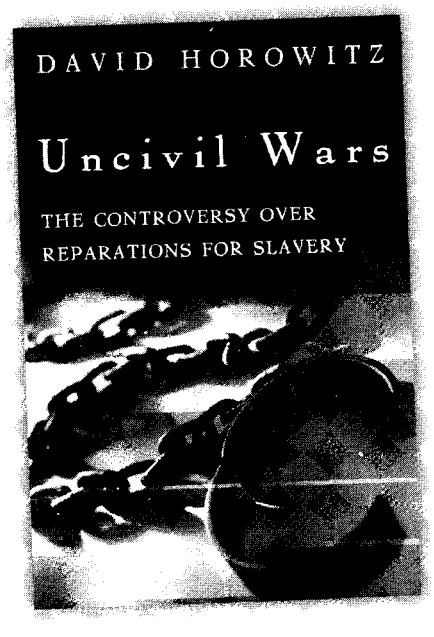
fended Australia's right to regulate immigration. In November, Denmark unexpectedly rejected its social-democratic coalition and put in a conservative government dependent on the votes of a nationalist party that had campaigned against further European integration and high rates of immigration. And in Italy, Silvio Berlusconi's conservative coalition—by uniting free marketers and nationalists—won a solid parliamentary majority against an international campaign that included *The Economist* magazine, which editorialized that he was unfit to govern. On top of these results, the Irish voted against ratifying the Nice Treaty on further European integration, against the urgings of all major political parties; and the Portuguese socialists lost heavily in municipal elections that are generally seen as a guide to the next parliamentary contest. All in all, a strong advance by the Right.

Against this trend, the Left can boast only of holding on to a majority in Belgium and of New Labour's retention of power in Britain. The first was not seen as important by anyone, and the second, though undoubtedly a substantial victory, was a guide to the past rather than the future. It represented a slightly surly willingness on the part of fair-minded British voters to give Tony Blair a second term to fulfill his first-term promises, and a determined unwillingness to listen to the Tories until they had served more time in opposition for prior crimes of sleaze and incompetence. Nor are elections the sole guide to how opinion has been moving: In the Tory leadership battle, the most conservative of the five candidates, Iain Duncan Smith, won the contest handsomely, defeating one of the few remaining conservative standard-bearers of Europeanism by two to one. Derided initially as a xenophobic Neanderthal, he is now winning media plaudits for the modest reasonableness of his speeches. In Italy, Berlusconi responded to the complaint of his foreign minister, Renato Ruggiero, that other ministers were not sufficiently enthusiastic about the euro by sacking Ruggiero. And, in a surprisingly swift and painless coup, the Bavarian prime minister and leader of the socially conservative Christian Social Union, Edmund Stoiber, defeated the more liberal Angela Merkel of the much larger Christian Democratic Union to become the candidate of the CDU-CSU coalition for chancellor in September's elections.

Stoiber's sudden eminence is perhaps the most significant of all the above developments. To begin with, he has a fair chance of beating the Social Democratic chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, to become the leader of what is still Europe's largest economy. He is leading Schroeder in the polls by about 5 percent; he is a seasoned and effective campaigner; and the German economy is in the doldrums and likely to remain so between now and September. This economic weakness plays to one of Stoiber's greatest strengths, for he is known to have made Bavaria's the most successful economy in Germany, with low unemployment and a flourishing high-tech sector. Far from alienating traditionalist and nationalist voters—which many American conservatives believe to be an inevitable side

A Bad Idea Whose Time Has Come



In the spring of 2001, as the reparations for slavery movement was gaining momentum, David Horowitz toured the campuses of America in an attempt to begin a dialogue about this issue. He was greeted with threats of violence and attempts to strangle his free speech.

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effect of free-market modernization—Stoiber has championed their causes. His Bavarian success is known as the "laptops and lederhosen" miracle, and he already has a national following because he has consistently sided with the German electorate against the powerful political establishment: He was skeptical about abandoning the mark for the euro, and favors strict limits on immigration.

All of this alarms liberal European commentators, who nervously predict that Stoiber will be forced to moderate his more nationalist and Euro-skeptic arguments. That may well be true, if only to ensure that there is harmony in the CDU-CSU partnership during the campaign. If Stoiber should win in September, however, he would join Berlusconi and Spain's José María Aznar in a conservative alliance that is highly nervous of further Euro-integration and very friendly to the United States. One might say to the Brussels bureaucracy what a courtier said to Louis XVI about the news from Paris: "Not a revolt, Sire, but a revolution."

One factor boosting Stoiber's chances, according to liberal Keynesian Anatole Kaletsky of the London *Times*, is that Germany has locked itself into an unfavorable exchange rate by entering the euro at too high a rate; and because it cannot alter its exchange rate without bringing down the euro altogether, it has no easy exit. Other European nations will at some time suffer from the same problem, when their membership in the single currency foists on them economic policies at variance with their interests.

Edmund Stoiber by Roman Genn

The euro is not the only issue driving many European voters in a nationalist—and thus conservative—direction. The growth in regulatory intervention by the EU in national economies—to the point where Brussels dictates the color of uniforms worn by shop and factory workers—also stimulates concern. And the failure of national governments to control immigration alarms voters, who see high concentrations of immigrants as culturally unassimilable and sometimes politically hostile. As all these fears have grown, especially in the aftermath of September 11, mainstream conservative parties have begun to take them seriously.

This has the potential to cause an earthquake. Successful conservative parties draw on three main constituencies: economic and small-government conservatives, moral traditionalists, and patriotic nationalists. Social democrats, by making multiculturalism a constitutional principle beyond questioning, in effect prevented conservatives from appealing to one-third of their natural supporters. That taboo was internalized by many conservative leaders, and their reluctance to woo nationalist voters drove these voters to cast "wasted votes" for extreme nationalist and neo-fascist parties. These parties split the Right and kept the Left in power. If the mainstream European conservative parties are now to include a moderated and respectable nationalist appeal in their programs—as Berlusconi bravely did—they will become more electable.

Bush need pay little attention—as yet—to these lessons from Europe; his bold wartime leadership is paying political dividends. But the example of his father, who won a war only to lose an election, must loom before him. "Blood dries quickly," as de Gaulle used to say, and unless the war is going on and going well in 2004, other issues are likely to decide votes. So far, however, Bush has shown no tendency to strengthen his domestic constituency by building on the strong public reaction to September 11—"United We Stand"—to win patriotic voters of every ethnicity. On the contrary, he has repeated his commitment to multicultural policies and an amnesty for illegal Mexican immigrants in the hope of winning more Latino votes. It is a bold and counterintuitive strategy. We shall see. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH** ■

Rages of the Age

On 'road rage,' 'air rage,' 'rink rage' . . .

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

WHATEVER happened to bad temper? When I threw a tantrum as a child (which as I recall was quite often), I was thought to stand in need of some correction: and so a terrible punishment, such as not being allowed out into the garden for an afternoon, was inflicted upon me.

Nowadays, however, I'd be thought to be in need of treatment. There'd be something hypothetically wrong with the limbic system of my brain (the result of birth trauma perhaps), I would suffer from episodic dyscontrol syndrome, I'd be regarded as an invalid. "Poor Theo, he has these fits, it's not his fault, he was born like that." Heads would nod or shake in commiseration with parent and child alike.

But rage is all the rage these days, as a quasi-neurological explanation for outbursts of aggressive and violent conduct, especially among adults. Numerous everyday situations are said to bring on an irresistible impulse to attack others: road rage, air rage, grocery-cart rage. Even a man, Thomas Junta, who killed a fellow father at their sons' hockey practice in Massachusetts, was thought by some to be suffering from a variant of the rage syndrome (rink rage).

Violent incidents on both sides of the Atlantic are increasingly reported as examples of specific rages, which take on in the popular imagination the attributes of epilepsy. As the inmates of the prison

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in which I work often put it, to explain why they thrust a screwdriver through their victim's skull, or some such deed, "My head just went," "I lost it," "I went into one."

"One what?" I ask.

"I just blacked out," is the usual reply. O epilepsy, what crimes are committed in thy name!

The sequence seems to be this. A pattern of conduct is noticed and given a name: "road rage," for example. It then becomes a bona fide medical diagnosis. (How long can it be before road rage is recognized as a disease in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association? The sufferer will, of course, have to fulfill at least three of the following criteria: He was driving legally; he has experienced insensate or disproportionate rage directed at other drivers on at least three occasions; he has experienced his urge to attack them as being beyond his control; he has not exhibited uncontrollable urges to aggression in other circumstances; and he was not under the influence of alcohol or psychoactive drugs at the time of his rages.)

A diagnosis becomes an excuse, and an excuse becomes a justification. Since all of us, when we are about to commit an act that we know in advance to be wrong, rehearse justifications for our ensuing wickedness, it is clear that by increasing the repertoire of justifications available to us for our own misconduct, the process I have described leads to a general deterioration in social behavior. The more rage is a diagnosis, the more rage there will be.

Let us not lose sight of how pleasurable and gratifying, at least in the short term, it can be to lose one's temper. As I know from my own experience as a bad-tempered child, there are few sounds more pleasing to the ear than the smash of broken crockery, the tinkle of shattered glass, the thud of objects, both hard and soft, against the wall. What balm to the soul, and what a soothing of the savage breast! Alas, there is—as with overindulgence in wine or whisky—a price to pay, a kind of hangover afterwards, at least for those with a semblance of a conscience or who are liable to punishment. One vows never to do it again, at any rate not until the next time.

Our increased susceptibility on various occasions and pretexts to expressing our rage is, in fact, only a particular instance of a wider phenomenon: a collective loss of self-control. Indeed, the very idea of self-control came under philosophical and ideological attack in the latter part of the 20th century, with devastating practical effects. We now find it difficult to control our appetites, for food, drugs, alcohol, chocolate, indeed for anything that we can consume. We ascribe the blame to others: to the manufacturers of what we consume, to the advertisers, the government, or even to our own brain, which we conceptualize as a kind of alien object within our skulls. As prisoners sometimes say to me, to inveigle me into prescribing something for them, "My mind's playing games with me, doctor."

There is a clear example of a collective loss of self-control in Britain: the destruc-

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tion of the taboo against eating in the street. The British can hardly have become hungrier or thirstier in any purely physiological sense in the last forty years, yet they now seem unable to progress further than a few yards in public without taking sustenance: Some, indeed, eat and drink in the middle of their consultations with me in the hospital. From the amount of detritus they leave behind them after thus refreshing themselves, which makes British streets by far the filthiest in the Western world, one might even suppose that the street was the *only* place they ever ate. The British are now a nation of Pooh Bears: For them, it is always time for a little something.

I described this collective loss of self-control to a group of polite and intelligent middle-class students a few weeks ago. They laughed: and it took me a few moments to realize that what they found amusing was that their recent forebears had been so primitive as to expect people to curb their appetite for the sake of social propriety. Could anything have been more ridiculous, or indeed oppressive? Never had I felt so old: and it occurred to me that, despite their apparent docility, I had before me a class of youngsters who might be susceptible to all sorts of rages.

Of course, there is nothing new under the sun. The idea of rage as giving rise to an uncontrollable impulse—and therefore to exculpatory temporary insanity—is hardly novel. It was put forward as an argument by Lord Ferrars in 1760, during his trial for murder before his peers, the House of Lords. Their Lordships were not taken in.

Ferrars shot a man called John Johnson, the steward of his estates, whom he had invited to his house, and against whom he had certain grudges. Johnson subsequently died, though not straight away. At his trial, Ferrars argued that he had always been of such choleric disposition that, at times when his blood was up, he knew not right from wrong. And indeed the evidence was that, from a very early age, Ferrars was of a vile, ungovernable, abusive, threatening, and ill-tempered disposition, because of which many would avoid his company altogether. In effect, Ferrars argued that—as the prisoners would no doubt put it—his head just went, he went into one, he lost it. He was therefore not responsible for his actions, and could therefore not be found guilty of the capital offense of murder.

It is certainly true that people differ in their temperaments, probably by constitution. But, said the prosecuting attorney general in his final address, "If the Law were to receive such excuses, it would put a sword into the hand of every savage and licentious man, to disturb private life and public order."

The attorney general also dealt in his closing speech with the idea that to lose one's temper was a kind of exculpating insanity:

> My Lords, in some sense, every crime proceeds from insanity. All cruelty, all brutality, all revenge, all injustice, is insanity. There were philosophers, in ancient times, who held this opinion as a strict maxim of their sect; and, my Lords, the opinion is right in philosophy, but dangerous in judicature. It may have a useful and noble influence, to regulate the conduct of men; to control their impotent passions; to teach them that virtue is the perfection of reason, as reason itself is the perfection of human nature; but not to extenuate crimes, nor excuse those punishments, which the law adjudges to be their due.

Ferrars was unanimously found guilty and was sentenced to death by public execution, thereafter to be anatomized by the surgeons (dissection in those days was legally confined to the corpses of hanged criminals). The noble earl behaved at his execution with more dignity than he had managed at any other time in his life, though a squabble broke out on the scaffold between the executioner and his deputy as to who was entitled to the gold coin that the earl gave the latter. A scuffle also broke out after his death for relics from his body, thought to have magical, medicinal, and monetary value. His corpse was then removed to the Surgeons' Hall for public dissection.

All this might seem brutal to us now, but it is doubtful whether our understanding of the issue of man's moral responsibility for his actions has advanced very much since 1760, if at all. Indeed, the attorney general of those days would make short work of road and other kinds of rage as an excuse: and he would be right to do so. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH II** ■

Is There a Dr. in the House?

What's in an honorific

JAY NORDLINGER

WHAT'S in an honorific? Not Shakespearean, but it is our topic for today. The question came up when the *New York Times* ran its several articles on the Cornel West controversy at Harvard. (West, a star professor in the Afro-American Studies department, was tiffing with the university's new president, Lawrence Summers.) Some of us brooding types noticed that the *Times* referred to West and other Afro-Am profs as "Dr."—"Dr. West," "Dr. Gates," etc.—while referring to Summers as plain ol' "Mr." (The *Times* did the same with the school's former president, Neil Rudenstine. All these people have Ph.D.'s, of course.) This was passing strange—the kind of thing that "made you go, 'Hmmm,'" in the words of the old rap song.

How's that? First, the *Times* seldom refers to *any* Ph.D. as "Dr." The head of Mt. Sinai Hospital, yes; the Nobel Prize winner in physics, perhaps. But an English prof or a sociologist or a drama teacher or something? Highly unusual. Second, all of the men referred to as "Dr." were black, while the palefaces were "Mr." Was this an act of racial condescension, the attempt of a great liberal newspaper to puff these aggrieved Afro-Am peddlers up? It seemed to many of us that this was likely. Issues of this kind were addressed by Roger Kimball in the last NR, in a piece on the West controversy, titled, pointedly enough, "Dr. West and Mr. Summers."

This business of honorifics may seem trivial—certainly while the nation is at war and all—but it touches on some enduring cultural and national questions. Cornel West and his like (not that

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there are many of his like, West being a pretty singular character) are very big on pride, self-esteem, and what Aretha Franklin called "R-E-S-P-E-C-T." He's just the sort to insist on, and elicit, "Dr."

And as it turns out, he did. It is the policy of the *Times* to leave it up to the individual—to the individual Ph.D.-holder—how he's to be referred to in the paper. A senior news editor at the *Times* confirmed to me that West has told the paper that he wants "Dr.," while Summers—one of the youngest men ever tenured in the history of Harvard, by the way—wants "Mr." (Arthur Schlesinger Jr.—by the way, again—has fought all his life against being called "Dr." He never earned a Ph.D., having been made a Harvard professor without one. Come to think of it, this may speak well for a Ph.D.)

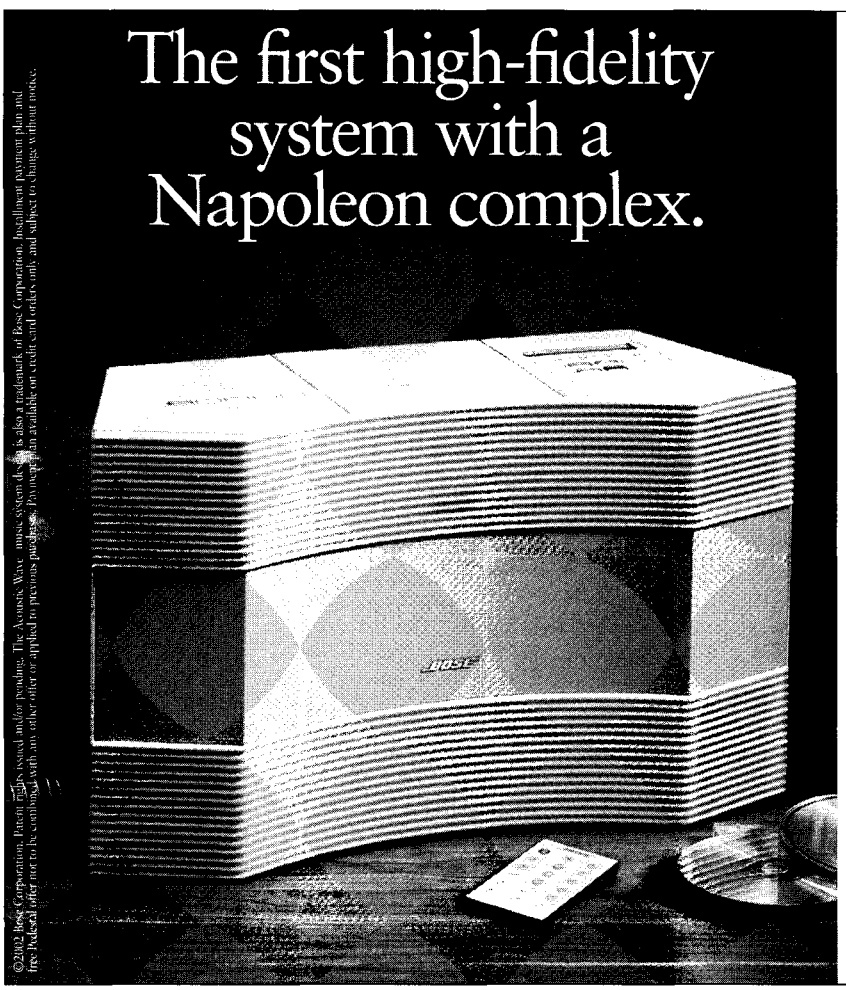
Another official at the *Times*—in the public-relations department—told me that the paper's reporters make it a habit to ask subjects who hold Ph.D.'s how they'd like to be referred to. This, however, would be news to many. I know several people—Ph.D.-holders—who've been quoted regularly in the *Times* for years who tell me they've *never* been asked such a question. (They're called "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Ms.") These include big-time, true-blue, super-serious academics. When I mentioned this to the senior news editor, he replied that these people need only give the word, and they'll be "Dr." (You know who you are; be it on your conscience.)

In the West controversy, the *Times* wasn't quite consistent. In late December—right off the bat—West was "Dr." But in a January 13 article, he was "Mr." (So, for that matter, were his departmental colleagues—no word yet on whether they're planning a lawsuit.) On December 29, Charles Ogletree—a (black) law professor at Harvard and a key ally of West—was "Mr." Later, on January 6, he was bumped to "Dr." He may well have requested "Dr." But he is almost surely the first law prof in history, or at least recent history, to be called "Dr." in the *Times*, or most anywhere else. ("Dr. Bork," anyone?)

The *Wall Street Journal* has a policy on honorifics too. Its stylebook holds that a Ph.D. is called "Dr." "if appropriate in context and if the individual desires it." The editorial page, however—always independent and (gloriously) contrarian—won't give you "Dr." unless you wear a white coat and stethoscope. The paper at large also requires that Martin Luther King be called "Dr. King," always. And this, the editorial page follows. King is virtually the only non-physician in this society always to be called "Dr." (and virtually the only dead person, too).

In fact, "Dr. King" is one of the great linguistic sacred cows in America. The *Times* does "Dr. King" as well, though many great and eminent persons who are dead are referred to in those pages by their last names only (e.g., Einstein). (Odd that Martin Luther King should be more a doctor than Einstein, isn't it?)

It is, indeed, remarkable that King should be "Dr." in almost every breath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concerning him. Granted, ours is a country in which black men, not too long ago, were routinely called "boy" (or worse); we are rightly conscious of a little dignity, even redress. But what's more significant about MLK? That he repeatedly put his life on the line so that black Americans could, at long last, become fully Americans—eventually paying the ultimate price—or that, early in his life, he managed to plagiarize his way to a Ph.D.? Anyone, practically, can get a Ph.D.; very few can be a Martin Luther King Jr.

■

For some, to be called 'Dr.' is a way of saying, 'I am some-body.'

■

Besides King, the most famous non-stethoscope-wearing "Dr." in America is Kissinger—though HK long ago asked the *New York Times* to call him "Mr." (which it does). (I myself have always thought "Dr. Kissinger" rather natural for the man, given his background in Germany: *Herr Doktor* and all that.) Another former secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, had a curious transformation. At first in the *Times*, she was "Mrs."; then she was "Ms."; finally, she was "Dr."—at her request ("Doctor's Orders," as a title—brilliant—in the *Times* put it). Albright's teacher at Columbia, Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser in the Carter administration, is "Mr." in the paper.

Condoleezza Rice, the current national security adviser, is "Ms. Rice"—her choice. Yet White House spokesmen routinely refer to her as "Dr. Rice." This is a bit strange, because the president's chief economic adviser, Lawrence Lindsey, is very much a "Dr."—Ph.D. in economics from Harvard—but is never, as far as I can tell, called "Dr." He's "Mr." (or just "Larry"). Why should this be? Is this a sneaking bit of racial condescension or puffery? Is it a harkening back to an earlier national security adviser, Dr. K? Or is it because there are a lot of Texans and southerners around the White House?

There is very much a North/South split in the country about "Dr." (as about so many other things). It is common practice for professors in the South to be called "Dr." At the universities I attended—Yankee—you would sooner have struck a professor than called him "Dr." In fact, it was something if the sullen and self-absorbed students grunted their acknowledgement of the prof at all.

Feelings about "Dr." are bound up in that bitch-goddess, Status. (Yes, I know: James said Success. But Status is a sister.) The best line in either Austin Powers movie belongs to Dr. Evil, who, when addressed as "Mr.," says, "I didn't spend six years in evil medical school to be called 'Mr.,' thank you very much!"

Our senior editor Jeffrey Hart, professor emeritus of English at Dartmouth, remembers serving as a campaign adviser to Nixon. To Jeff's amusement, Nixon always called him "Dr. Hart." This accords with the Nixon we know: class-conscious, status-nervous, chip-on-the-shouldery, the boy from Whittier who received a tuition scholarship to Harvard but couldn't go, because the family didn't have the money to send him to and from Massachusetts. Nixon, according to Jeff, would also say, "I'm no Ph.D., but . . .," before launching into a disquisition on some arcane topic.

For some, to be called "Dr." is a way of saying, "I am some-*body*," in the words of the Rev. Jesse Jackson. (Ah, "the Rev. Mr. Jackson" and "the Rev. Al Sharpton"—that's "a whole 'nother" article, as we say in my family.) Many years ago, another NR senior editor, Rick Brookhiser, surveying all the mail sent to Bill Buckley, adjudged that the most interesting letters were those from prison. And the least interesting? The ones from people who signed themselves "Ph.D." I know someone who's a lawyer in West Virginia who has found that the surest way to rattle his opposition's expert Ph.D. witness is to address him as "Mr."

But then, I have another acquaintance who earned a Ph.D. in biochem—and he pleads for his "Dr." because, "There aren't many perks in this line of work, and I'd like my little payoff from polite society." Well, at least he's not a drama teacher. The bulk of the Ph.D.'s I know balk at being called anything but "Mr." (or maybe "Professor," in the case of academics), believing that "Dr." has come to mean Marcus Welby, and that's about it. As for those who get bent out of shape when they're "Dr."-less, all we can say is, "Ph.D., heal thyself." **NR**

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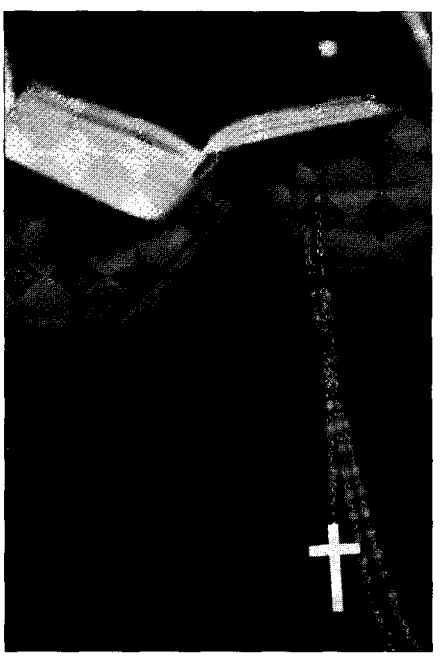
Sins of the Fathers

Pedophile priests and the challenge to the American Church

ROD DREHER

WHEN news broke in 1992 that former Catholic priest James Porter, known for years to Church officials as a predatory child rapist, had sexually abused dozens of children during his clerical career, making his the worst clerical pedophilia case in U.S. history, it was hard to imagine how anything could get worse for the Church. But as American Catholics have learned since the wave of clergy molestation lawsuits began in 1985, new lows are always just around the corner.

Porter assaulted many of the children while serving in the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., which prompted the *Boston Globe* to report aggressively on the assaults and the Church cover-up. Under fire, an angry Bernard Cardinal Law, the archbishop of Boston, denounced the media for what he believed was sensational reporting of the scandal. Later that year, Law said in a *Globe* interview that his staff had gone through past molestation cases the archdiocese had investigated and found no cases that merited further attention or concern.



It wasn't true. While Law was fulminating against the press and assuring the public that all was well with his clergy, a Boston priest, Father John Geoghan, was in the final years of a 36-year career, during which he molested scores of children in at least three Boston-area parishes, including a four-year-old boy and seven boys in one extended family. Documents show that the archdiocese had long been aware at its topmost levels of Geoghan's abuse of children. Law's predecessors knew about this priest, and they made sure Law knew about him when he took over in 1984.

Law nevertheless approved Geoghan as pastor of St. Julia's parish, where he would go on to molest more children. In 1989, following molestation complaints, Geoghan, by then a veteran of institutions that treat sexually abusive priests, went back into treatment. The archdiocese then returned him to the parish, where he continued to molest kids. After leaving parish work in 1993, Geoghan was assigned to the chaplaincy at a nursing home, but continued to seek out and abuse children.

By the time Geoghan was convicted in the first of three criminal trials in early January, more than 130 people had come forward, claiming to have been sexually assaulted by Geoghan when they were children. Though the criminal statute of limitations has expired in nearly all of the cases, the Church has paid millions to settle civil suits in the Geoghan matter, and faces 90 more suits—none of which are being contested by the accused priest, who was defrocked by Pope John Paul II in 1998.

Following new revelations in the *Globe*, Law gave an extraordinary January 9 press conference in which he apologized for his "tragically incorrect" 1984 decision to continue Geoghan's ministry. The cardinal claimed that assignment came after psychiatric and medical evaluators cleared the known pedophile for parish work. He announced a new "get tough" policy that would require all archdiocesan employees to report suspected incidents of clergy sex abuse to civil authorities.

Yet subsequent reporting by the *Boston Globe*, based on documents made public as a result of civil trials against the archdiocese, revealed that Geoghan had been in his new parish for a month before the archdiocese ordered his evaluation. And, reported the *Globe*, one of the two doctors who gave Geoghan a pass had no psychotherapy credentials. The other, a psychiatrist, had no experience treating sexual offenders, and had himself settled a 1977 lawsuit in which a female patient accused him of sexual molestation.

It gets worse. Last year, pedophile Christopher Reardon pleaded guilty to 75 counts of criminal molestation of young boys, some of whom he abused at the office of the Boston-area parish in which he worked. Workers in the parish testified before a grand jury that lawyers for the archdiocese counseled them not to aid authorities looking into the matter, out of concern that the sexual activities of Reardon's supervisor, Father Jon C. Martin, would open the archdio-

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cese to negligence claims. The workers testified that they found condoms in Fr. Martin's bed, and that he often had male overnight guests in his rectory bedroom. If it can be proved that Fr. Martin was homosexually active, and that that in some way caused him to be negligent in his supervision of Reardon, the archdiocese could be in for another devastating round of lawsuits.

Molesters and sexual deviants among the Catholic clergy, episcopal negligence and cover-up, stonewalling chanceries and empty claims that at long last the Church is going to get serious about cleaning house: This is, of course, not a new story. And that, say critics, among them conservative Catholics loyal to Church teaching, is the real scandal.

AN ECCLESIASTICAL ENRON

"For God's sake, this is the umpteenth time something like this has happened!" says one angry priest. "The Louisiana case [that initiated the wave of lawsuits against the Church] was 1985! This is 2002! How does Law have the hubris to stand in front of cameras and say that now, *now* he's come up with a policy?"

Accurate estimates of the amount of money the Catholic Church has paid in damages and settlements to victims of clergy abuse are impossible to come by, but informed sources within legal and abuse-survivors' circles put the number at between $600 million and $1.3 billion since 1984. The Church is hemorrhaging both money and the trust of its members. Morale among priests, the vast majority of whom serve with integrity, has suffered. And many place the blame squarely at the foot of the American bishops, whom they accuse of placing the "good" of the institutional Church over the welfare of the flock.

"The bishops have the mindset of company men," observes one priest. "Being company men is fine when the company is on a growth curve. But not when your company is Enron."

The analogy to the disgraced energy corporation collapsing under the weight of its leaders' own malfeasance may sound extreme, but consider what happened in Dallas in 1997, when a jury returned a staggering $120 million judgment against the diocese in a molestation case egregious even by the abysmal standards of such matters. Church officials, pleading that the Dallas diocese would be bankrupted, convinced the plaintiffs to settle for $31 million instead. Had the victims not agreed, the 400,000 Catholics in Dallas could have witnessed the selling off of many of their schools and parishes.

"It is disgusting. It is revolting. It tries your faith," says a veteran clergyman, a Dallas native. "But priests who try to speak out just get crushed."

The scandals involving Porter and Geoghan are arguably the worst in modern times, but they are by no means the only ones to receive national attention. Consider these high-profile cases, all from the last decade:

• The landmark civil suit in Dallas primarily involved Rudy Kos, a former priest, who was convicted in criminal court of serial molestation of altar boys, and sent to prison. During the trial, it was revealed that Church officials were repeatedly warned that Kos was a danger to children, and did nothing. After the verdict, Msgr. Robert Rehkemper, former vicar general of the diocese, said in an interview, "No one ever says anything about what the role of the parents was in all this"; also that Kos's child victims "knew what was right and what was wrong. Anybody who reaches the age of reason shares responsibility for what they do." Michael Sheehan, the seminary rector who was advised time and time again about Kos's attraction to children, but allowed him to remain, continued to rise in the hierarchy, and is now archbishop of Santa Fe.

• In 1999, the Diocese of Santa Rosa, Calif., already paying out $5.4 million in child sex-abuse settlements from the early 1990s, shuddered when DNA and taped evidence proved that Bishop G. Patrick Ziemann had been having sex with one of his priests—a relationship the priest claimed Ziemann forced on him with blackmail. It emerged that Ziemann, who resigned, had lost millions of the diocese's funds in shady investment schemes—fraud for which he was never prosecuted because, said local law-enforcement officials, Church authorities refused to cooperate with investigators.

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• John Bollard, a former Jesuit seminarian in San Francisco, filed a sexual-harassment lawsuit four years ago against the Society of Jesus, claiming his superiors in the order pressed him constantly for gay sex. When their claim to be immune for religious reasons from sexual-harassment law failed, the Jesuits settled the suit.

The ongoing crisis began, as a public matter, in 1985, when a Louisiana priest named Gilbert Gauthe was convicted of molesting a number of boys in the Diocese of Lafayette. On the heels of the Gauthe conviction, the American bishops and heads of religious orders received a confidential report co-authored by the Rev. Thomas Doyle, a canon lawyer working in the Vatican embassy in Washington. The lengthy document warned the bishops that the Gauthe case was likely to be only one of many, and that if they didn't act swiftly and decisively to clean out their stables, the Church could lose an estimated $1 billion over the next ten years. It also cautioned that conventional methods for treating pederasty are not effective.

The bishops shelved the report and, by and large, took no action, Doyle says today. Radicalized by the extent of the problem, the damage to victims, and the hierarchy's inaction, Doyle sabotaged his ecclesiastical career by speaking out on behalf of victims. He now serves as a consultant to plaintiffs in civil suits. "Average people feel totally powerless when it comes to the hierarchy," Doyle says. "Every

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time I speak with a victim—and I've counseled hundreds of them—I'm shocked by how deep the pain is. And in every single case I've been involved with, I'm the first person from the Church who has come to them with comfort."

It is true that the hierarchy, nationally, hasn't been entirely unresponsive. Some bishops have indeed mandated the reporting of suspected child abuse by clergy to civil authorities. The national bishops' conference recommended stricter guidelines in the wake of the Porter disaster, and issued a committee report in 1994 offering further advice to its members.

Some observers believe that bishops have gotten better in recent years because they've become more sensitive to the problem. A more cynical view holds that they tightened up because they were scared of being financially ruined by all the lawsuits.

Last June, Edward Cardinal Egan and a representative of the Archdiocese of New York's insurer met with priests to issue stringent new guidelines for reporting suspected instances of sexual abuse by archdiocesan employees. Yet the supposed new level of vigilance in the chancery did not prevent a New York diocesan priest who had been named in an ongoing sex-abuse lawsuit involving a minor in a Bronx church from remaining in his Staten Island parish. Egan suspended the priest pending the outcome of the lawsuit only after the *New York Post* reported the allegations against him.

Three other priests named in the lawsuit—all Carmelites—had been taken out of the Bronx parish by the religious order responsible for them. As of last summer, at least one was doing parish work in his native Puerto Rico, and, when reached by phone by a *Post* reporter, admitted that sexual molestation had taken place in the Bronx rectory with the teenage plaintiff, but claimed that he had not taken part.

TROUBLE AT THE TOP

Why does this continue to happen? For several reasons, priests and others say. For one thing, Church law restricts the right of bishops to move quickly against suspected pedophile priests. Says one canon lawyer, "In all fairness to the American bishops, they tried to get the Holy See to approve an expedited process for laicization, but Rome didn't go for it." That's not necessarily a bad thing, says Doyle, himself a canonist. Accused priests are entitled to a fair hearing, a right that may in fact be more important than ever, given the risk that false accusations in the current environment pose to an innocent cleric's vocation. In fact, Doyle complains that the guidelines newly promulgated by the Vatican ordering bishops and religious superiors to refer sex-abuse cases directly to Rome are a step backward. "It's an attempt to quickly solve the problem to reduce liability. It actually further erodes credibility. The accused priest will be tried in a secret tribunal in Rome. It enshrouds the issue in more secrecy, and calls into serious doubt whether these priests will receive due process."

Another reason for the inaction, say priests, is that the kind of men who rise to the episcopacy are generally not the sort who rock boats. "Most bishops are very choice-averse," says Father G., a southern priest. "They were chosen because they would do the things that were not unusual." Says Father R., who serves in the Southwest, "Priests and bishops see so much evil, it can deaden one's sensibilities, so one doesn't have a normal kind of reaction."

Some argue that the age of the American hierarchy has a lot to do with its demonstrably poor ability to handle these problems. Most bishops today were formed in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, before the widespread loss of faith and the turmoil of the sexual revolution. They have been temperamentally and psychologically unable to adapt to changing social realities, particularly the post-conciliar idea that the life and governance of the Church must be more open and accountable to the laity.

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Others attribute the failure of bishops to act firmly in these matters to a bureaucratic reliance on experts and committees as a way of diffusing responsibility for difficult or unpopular decisions. In Boston, this dovetailed tragically with the culture of therapy, which medicalizes the problem of radical evil and disables the common sense of men, like Cardinal Law, who know better. Washington lawyer Charles Molineaux, a Knight of Malta who called for Law's resignation in a recent *Wall Street Journal* column, observed that "after 2,000 years of experience with sin and recidivism," it is surprising that the Church allows itself to be guided in these grave matters by trendy psychotherapy.

Then there is old-fashioned clericalism, in which bishops, particularly older ones, reflexively defend priests as if they were their sons. And finally, the concepts of mercy, redemption, and humility come into play. "What I have seen—and I have experienced this myself—is, you don't like to judge other priests," says a priest who is a top administrator in an East Coast diocese. "We all have some kind of failing. The first thing an accused priest says to a bishop is, 'Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.' They know from history that almost every priest has a weakness of some kind, not that they've acted on it. So when a priest says something like that, the bishop thinks, 'Well, I'm not perfect either.'"

Take the case of Bishop J. Keith Symons, 68, who resigned in 1998 as the head of the Palm Beach, Fla., diocese after five men came forward to accuse him of having molested them decades earlier, when they were altar boys in his parish. Symons admitted the charges and left his post. Two years later, to the dismay of victims'-rights groups, Symons resurfaced in Michigan, living in a convent and conducting spiritual retreats for adult Catholics.

When the activist group Roman Catholic Faithful discovered that an admitted child molester was quietly allowed by the bishop of Lansing to resume ministry, it alerted the media, which reported the story. Not only did

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the Lansing bishop defend his action, but the bishop emeritus, Kenneth J. Povish, denounced RCF in a newspaper column as a "self-appointed vigilante group" and praised the pederast bishop as a "wounded healer" who is "likely to do an excellent job."

A PROTECTION RACKET

One disturbing facet of this willingness to overlook serious sexual sin, say a number of priests and seminarians, is the existence of a discreet but powerful homosexual network within seminaries and chanceries. A. W. Richard Sipe, a psychiatrist and former Benedictine monk who has treated scores of sexually abusive priests and has written extensively about the phenomenon, says that the reality of the gay network is well known to clerics and others closely familiar with the workings of the Catholic Church, though difficult to prove from public sources.

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If orthodox Catholics want to force positive change on the hierarchy, they can speak out—loudly.

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"I've reviewed over 100 cases of sexual abuse by priests. In there you get the documentation, which unfortunately often gets sealed by the Church after they settle the cases," says Sipe, who is an expert witness in abuse cases. "It's very clear that you can trace [the network], one person to another, through a sequence of appointments, the sequence of who follows whom in what position, and how they got there. It is a fact, and nobody can sincerely deny it." A typical pattern involves a priest becoming sexually involved with a seminarian or younger cleric, and then the junior man following his elder up the diocesan hierarchy. Sipe and others interviewed say this "bond of secrecy" introduces the possibility of blackmail: Those in positions of authority are prevented from acting against others because they themselves are compromised. It's a form of mutually assured destruction.

For the last decade, Church officials around the country have been moving quietly, with some success, to reform the worst of the so-called "pink palace" seminaries. "It's not official policy, but it would be very hard for a man with a homosexual orientation to get into the seminary here," says a top administrator in a major archdiocese. "Everybody knows it has been a problem, and bishops are trying to clean it up. But you can't say that officially, because it will blow up in your face."

A quiet policy of excluding homosexuals may not please liberal Catholics, whose names and phone numbers tend to be in reporters' Rolodexes. Some dissenting Catholics capitalize on sex-abuse scandals to agitate for their pet causes, including an end to priestly celibacy. (There is no evidence to suggest that celibacy turns normal people into pedophiles—and there's plenty of evidence that married men can be pedophiles as well.)

If orthodox Catholics want to force positive change on the hierarchy, they can speak out—loudly. The Rev. Charles Fiore, an outspoken conservative priest in Wisconsin, says, "Change is going to come only when the laity stands up and says, Enough." Tom Doyle believes the most significant development since 1985 has been an increased skepticism of the hierarchy on the part of lay Catholics, many of whom no longer trust the bishops to do the right thing by their children, and will hold the bishops' feet to the fire on these matters. And this often means being uncowed by the bishops' stature, and unafraid to appeal to law-enforcement authorities and the secular media for remedy.

When Roman Catholic Faithful uncovered a secret pornographic website for gay priests and clergy, it documented the names, photographs, and writings of the participants and sent the information to members of the Church hierarchy. "Nothing was done about it, so we made all the information public on our website," RCF president Steve Brady says. "The press coverage got the site taken down, and some of the priests in trouble."

Lay Catholics should demand more openness from the institutional Church. Dioceses should open their books to laymen as a matter of accountability and oversight. Doyle, who as counselor to many victims is privy to settlement details, says the people in the pews "would be absolutely shocked to discover how much of their money was being paid out on these settlements."

Similarly, given how poorly the institutional Church has policed itself, there should be lay boards to review diocesan personnel files to make sure sex abusers aren't being concealed. "I don't want to hear about another new policy until someone says to me that someone other than the fox guarding the henhouse has examined the files," says lawyer Steve Rubino, a leading victims' attorney.

Restoring the Church's credibility also depends on the bishops' being less lawyerly and more Christian. Johnnie Cochrane didn't come to save the world, Jesus Christ did. This means seeing those who have been raped or molested by priests as suffering souls in need of pastoral care, not moneygrubbing plaintiffs who deserve the brass-knuckles routine.

One parish priest says he will never forget the day he realized his former boss, an East Coast bishop (now retired), was a true man of God. "We had to meet with a family whose child had been abused by one of our priests. When we sat down face to face with them and the lawyers, we told them that the bishop had said his first priority was to do the right thing. We told them our investigation had found that the priest was guilty, but that he had never been in this kind of situation before. We had removed him from any further parish involvement. We told them that we didn't believe we had been neglectful, but we wanted to help the family in any way we could, because we recognized lives had been damaged, and we were profoundly sorry. And that was the bishop's position.

"I looked across the table, and the family was crying," the priest recalled. "The father said, 'Thank you. We never wanted to persecute anybody. That was all we wanted to hear.'" **NR**

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The Enron Trap

And how to stay out of it

BYRON YORK

HERE'S a worrisome scenario for the White House as it tries to navigate its way through the Enron mess: Weeks from now, there's still no evidence that anyone in the administration did anything wrong, yet the White House finds itself in a confrontation with Congress over contacts with Enron. Democratic senators demand information, the president refuses to give it up, and subpoenas fly. Legal battles follow, and the White House ultimately loses—all without any credible suggestion of wrongdoing.

It might seem farfetched, and indeed there appears to be great confidence in the White House that it won't happen. But the president's increasingly hard-line stance against releasing information related to Enron could make it a reality.

After initially sending out word that Enron chief Kenneth Lay called treasury secretary Paul O'Neill, commerce secretary Donald Evans, and a few others as the company was going down, the White House now refuses to reveal whether there were any more calls or contacts. Spokesman Ari Fleischer says the president's staff isn't even trying to find out if there *were* any more calls or contacts. "There is no hint there of any wrongdoing," Fleischer recently told a reporter who asked if the White House was doing an internal review of its dealings with Enron. "If you have any information, any evidence you would like to bring forward about potential wrongdoing, we will do our best to track it down for you. But other than that, I liken it to a fishing expedition." With that, Fleischer not only refused to say more, but also raised the bar for future inquiries. From now on, if anyone can come up with a specific allegation of wrongdoing, the White House will respond. If not, don't expect any information.

Enron chief Kenneth Lay by Roman Genn

All of which, of course, prompts the question of whether there *were* any more Enron contacts. While it's possible that the calls already made public were the only communications between Enron and the administration, it's also possible—perhaps probable—that there were more. "I think there were a lot of phone calls to a lot of people," says one former Enron insider (who wasn't privy to them). "There's a corporate pattern of Enron as an astute political entrepreneur. If Al Gore had won the election, Enron officials would have been on the phone with whoever could help them." Why wouldn't the same be true with Bush?

The former Enron insider also raises the possibility, so far unnoticed in the press, that there were indirect contacts between Enron and the White House—someone at Enron calling a friend of the administration who then called the White House. A number of people close to the White House have ties to Enron, so there are several possible channels of communication. Fleischer himself seemed to confirm the possibility of more contacts when he said, early in the controversy, "I think it should surprise no one that people in the administration receive phone calls from people who are either in business or in unions. It happens every day."

So far, no one other than reporters and a few House Democrats—most prominently California representative Henry Waxman, who has been waging a one-man war on the White House—has asked for more information. Joe Lieberman and Carl Levin, the two key Democratic investigators in the Senate, have studiously avoided saying they'll ask the White House for anything. "They're being extremely careful, and that's appreciated," says a top GOP Senate aide. "These chairmen are not holding political press conferences and trying to point fingers. They have to preserve their own credibility."

Levin has been particularly judicious—which is a good thing for Republicans, because as chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, he is the only man in the Senate with unilateral subpoena power. Although he has had many chances to threaten the White House with a subpoena, he has so far declined to do so. But at the same time, Levin has made clear that he wishes the administration would be more forthcoming. "I think it's better for everybody to kind of lay out whatever connections, contacts, people had or have, and if it's in the past, just simply say it," Levin said on CBS January 20. "People understand that there are going to be contacts and connections with various groups and entities in this country. Just say it, get it over with, get it behind you."

If Levin ever decides to demand Enron information from the White House, he'll probably start with a separate but related subject: Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force. For nearly a year, Cheney has been locked in a dispute with the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, over the names of outsiders the task force consulted while crafting the administration's energy policy. The GAO, acting at Waxman's request, first asked for the information and later, when Cheney refused, threatened to take the vice president to court. Cheney stood his ground, citing what he said would be a chilling effect on future government consultations if the task-force meetings were made public.

Cheney's lawyers say the GAO simply doesn't have the legal authority to force the vice president to give up the material. Each side seems to have a reasonable case, so it's a question that could go either way in court. But if Levin decides to make his own demand for the information,

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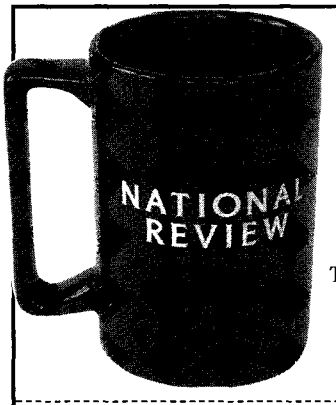
Cheney will most likely be trapped. Unlike the GAO, the Senate unquestionably has the power to subpoena the information, and there appears to be no privilege that Cheney could cite to keep it secret. "To the extent the request would be for identities and information provided by the outside-the-government advisers," says one well-connected Washington lawyer, "it's plainly not within the area of executive privilege." Given that, it's possible that Cheney might find himself winning his point against the GAO, only to be forced to hand over the material to the Senate.

So far, the White House has avoided sending a clear signal that it will cooperate with any requests from Capitol Hill. "I think that depends entirely on something that is just part conjecture and speculation," Fleischer said recently. Fleischer also delivered what appeared to be a veiled threat against Democrats, suggesting it would not be a good idea for them to begin an investigation of a popular president. "If Washington goes down the usual path of partisan fishing expeditions, I think they're going to lose the support of the public," he said. "The public wants to know that people here in this town are focused on the wrongdoing where the wrongdoing occurs, and not engaging in wasteful fishing expeditions."

That's not just a bluff. Democrats know there are significant political hazards in pursuing a White House/Enron investigation. Any probe of the administration's dealings with Enron would likely turn what is now an investigation of a corporate scandal into open partisan warfare—with Democrats nearly as vulnerable as Republicans. Although it's true that Enron gave about three-quarters of its contributions to Republicans during the period from 1989 to 2001 (according to the Center for Responsive Politics), it's also true that the company funneled a lot of money to Democrats on the Hill. In the House, six of the top ten recipients of Enron money are Democrats. In the Senate, there are five Democrats in the Enron top 20—including majority leader Tom Daschle.



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In some cases, liberal Democrats took a lot more Enron money than conservative Republicans. For example, Texas representative Sheila Jackson Lee accepted nearly seven times as much money ($38,000) as House majority leader Dick Armey ($5,550). New York senator Charles Schumer received more than ten times as much ($21,933) as minority leader Trent Lott ($2,000). Liberal stalwarts Ted Kennedy, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Tom Harkin also took Enron cash. Even Lieberman pocketed $2,000.

With figures like that, Democrats know they can't try to demonize every politician who took Enron money. "There's a little bit of oil in everybody's hair on this," says one Democratic strategist who wishes the whole controversy would go away. "It's not a clean hit." Even more perilous for Democrats is the probability that, should they open an investigation of White House/Enron contacts, they will find it hard to limit the probe to the *Bush* White House. "There were a lot more dealings with Clinton than with Bush," says the former Enron insider. "It's going to rebound more against Democrats than Republicans."

There's a lot of evidence to support that assertion. Enron executives accompanied Clinton Commerce Department officials on trade missions that resulted in lucrative deals for Enron. Bill Clinton himself pushed an Enron project in India, as did his top aide Mack McLarty (who later went on Enron's payroll). Enron worked closely with Clinton and Vice President Gore on the Kyoto global-warming treaty, which was an Enron favorite because it would have imposed burdensome regulations on the company's competitors. During all this time, Enron made big contributions to the Democratic National Committee. If today's Democrats try to suggest that contacts between the White House and Enron are a bad thing, they will make the Clinton administration look very bad indeed.

On the other hand, maybe Democrats won't worry too much about that. Bill Clinton is gone, disgraced by a host of other scandals ranging from sex-with-interns to his mishandling of the threat posed by international terrorism. For Democrats, the damage from learning that he was too cozy with Enron might be outweighed by the benefit of suggesting an equivalence between the clean-hands Bush White House and the scandal-ridden Clinton White House.

But that's not a decision that has to be made immediately. For now, Senate Democrats can concentrate on the phony accounting and other misbehavior inside Enron, which would be a major scandal even if the company had never made a single political contribution. At the very least, Democrats might reap some benefit from the growing perception that one of President Bush's major supporters is a crook. What opposition party wouldn't want that?

And while they investigate Enron, Democrats can keep asking questions about White House contacts with Enron. If it turns out there were more than first revealed—even if they simply provide additional evidence that the White House did nothing to intervene in behalf of the failing company—Democrats will be able to ask the obvious follow-up: What else is the White House keeping secret? That's the danger of the president's stand-your-ground, tell-them-nothing strategy. You always look like you're hiding something. **NR**

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Lapse of Reason

The libertarians and cloning

RAMESH PONNURU

In November, the libertarian magazine *Reason* posted on its website defenses of human cloning by 38 "leading thinkers and commentators." The occasion was noteworthy for several reasons. One is that Virginia Postrel, the former editor of the magazine who organized the feature, assembled a truly impressive group. Writers included Nobel Prize-winning scientists, prominent bioethicists, political scientists, law professors, economists, and philosophers. The symposium provided a fair sampling of the best arguments for human cloning on offer.

Another reason to pay attention is that human cloning is quickly rising to the top of issues that divide libertarians from conservatives. To be sure, many supporters of cloning, including many of Postrel's contributors, are not libertarians. But many of the most articulate supporters are libertarians, and the issue has clearly become a priority for them. Postrel recently went so far as to write that much as she dislikes Tom Daschle, she hopes the Democrats keep the Senate this year because they're less hostile to cloning.

Both parties, reflecting public opinion, want to ban "reproductive cloning." But Democrats, more than Republicans, favor "therapeutic cloning." The distinction concerns not the cloning technique—the act of creating a human embryo would be the same in both categories—but the intention. In reproductive cloning, the cloned embryo would be intended to develop into a baby just as a normal embryo would. In therapeutic cloning, the cloned embryo would be used for medical research and treatment, and destroyed in the process.

The *Reason* symposiasts differ among themselves about whether reproductive cloning should be banned (some would ban it because it is currently unlikely to yield healthy children) and whether cloning research should be federally funded. But all of them, along with other writers affiliated with *Reason*, favor therapeutic cloning, and none of them seems opposed in principle to reproductive cloning. Their arguments overlap considerably. Those arguments also share characteristic flaws.

HYSTERIA ABOUT HYSTERIA

Before examining the merits of the case for therapeutic cloning, it's necessary to clear away some underbrush. Debaters on both sides of this debate, as in other debates, use loaded rhetoric and emotional appeals. In the case of the *Reason* symposiasts, much of this rhetoric is just silly—especially coming from people who present themselves as the party of, well, reason.

They liken a ban on therapeutic cloning to the persecution of Galileo, say it is "contrary to the ideals of American freedom and democracy," claim that it would lead to a "vindictive police state driven by anti-scientific agitators," and attribute support for it to a "fear of change." The memory of witch hunts and burnings at the stake for heresy is invoked. Michael Lind writes, "Like most Americans, I do not want to see the United States degenerate into a cross between Amish Pennsylvania and theocratic Iran." Harvey Silverglate imagines that a ban on cloning, like a ban on abortion, would violate the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of religion and speech. He also writes that "as recently as the horrendous events in New York and Washington, we have come to see the inevitable result of intolerance of differences as to issues that touch the ultimate questions of human life and existence."

Several contributors also write, without a trace of irony, that *supporters* of a ban are guilty of "panic" and "unreserved hysteria."

Overheated rhetoric need not discredit the cause with which it is associated. Some of the rhetoric here, however, stems from an analytical failure: specifically, a failure to acknowledge that there are rational arguments against therapeutic cloning that demand refutation. In the comments quoted above, it is assumed that opponents of cloning are moved by religious sectarianism or psychological flaws. They are taken to have made no effort to reason about cloning, rather than merely to have reasoned mistakenly.

PUBLIC REASON: ITS USE AND ABUSE

The assumption that there are no rational grounds for conservative moral views—or at least none that need consideration in public debates—has a fine pedigree. Whether or not they know it, the libertarians are echoing John Rawls, the most influential liberal political philosopher (which is of course to say the most influential political philosopher) of the last thirty years. Rawls argues that in a modern democracy, policies must be based on reasons that can in principle command universal assent rather than on personal interests, secret rationales, or sectarian religious dogmas.

Rawls's concept of "public reason" sounds fine in bare outline. But as he and his students elaborate it, it has a nasty tendency to rule conservative policies outside the realm of acceptable debate. Rawlsians don't, in the first place, look very hard for conservatives' reasons. If large numbers of people prefer conservative policies but are unable to articulate suitable "public reasons" for them, their views are held to be sub-rational and therefore can't prevail. If philosophers can articulate rational reasons for these policies but the average Joe can't understand their reasoning, those reasons are deemed insufficiently accessible to the public.

What is ignored here, as such critics of Rawlsian public reason as Robert P. George and Christopher Wolfe have observed, is the possibility that people can have inarticulate but genuine knowledge. They note that most people could not, if pressed, make an airtight case that murder is wrong. Yet their belief that it is wrong is perfectly rational and amounts to genuine knowledge.

Religious teaching, too, can reflect reason. Take the most influential religious opposition to abortion and therapeutic cloning, that of the Catholic Church. Whether or not its teaching is correct, it is based on premises that are in principle rational and accessible to non-Catholics: the premise that embryos are members of the human species, for example, rather than the

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premise that they have souls. (Not only does the Church use these reasons to present its public case, they are in fact the reasons that guide the Church: It has never taken a position on whether embryos have souls.)

Rawlsian liberalism stacks the deck further by assuming that the default position is the liberal one; it's up to conservatives to make the case—which has to be simple enough to be public, yet compelling enough to be well reasoned—for departing from it. No wonder Rawls has pronounced that anti-abortion arguments do not meet the test of public reason. These arguments are inadmissible, even though a Rawlsian may generously concede that they may in some sense be true.

In the cloning debate, the libertarians are setting up standards that work just like public reason. Opposition to cloning is held to be based merely on subjective feelings of revulsion or on religious dogma, with no reasons to back them up. In the *Reason* symposium, philosopher of science Noretta Koertge argues that "we should pay attention to our moral intuitions, but only as data which should be subjected to philosophical analysis and complemented with empirical findings, not as the last word when the conclusions of rational argument do not validate our gut feelings." Koertge is right about that, so long as the possibility that the intuitions are correct is given more than lip service. The pro-cloners usually don't give it even that.

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Pro-cloning polemics frequently frame the debate in terms that obscure the point at issue.

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Harvey Silverglate's First Amendment fantasy, mentioned above, simply assumes that opposition to cloning and abortion must be based on non-rational religious views. His own side is composed of "rational people devoted to liberty." Ron Bailey, *Reason*'s science editor, has expressed similar thoughts, as when he approvingly quoted a bioethicist who attributes opposition to cloning to "nostalgia for the Inquisition."

The libertarians also make their opponents' case look less reasoned than it is simply by misstating it (probably innocently). The *Reason* symposium is characteristic of arguments for therapeutic cloning in its failure ever to describe accurately the case against it. In last year's debate over stem-cell research, Bailey misunderstood the pro-life position to be that stem cells are babies. The actual pro-life view is that the embryos from which the stem cells are taken are human beings; and that, since taking the stem cells destroys the embryos, the act is homicidal in the same sense as killing a baby.

Pro-cloning polemics frequently frame the debate in terms that obscure the point at issue. A cloning ban is said to be an attempt to "ban research," its supporters are said to fear knowledge, and it is opposed on that basis. It is, of course, true that a ban would bar certain types of research and could prevent certain knowledge from being discovered—but because the research to get the knowledge involves homicide, not because it is research. To adapt political scientist Kenneth Minogue's phrase, the ban would merely attach a "negative adverbial condition" to research: that it proceed non-homicidally.

THE NUB OF THE MATTER

Virginia Postrel does, at least, address the key issue in the debate over therapeutic cloning: What moral status do cloned human embryos have? Do they have any claims on us? (The right not to be destroyed would seem to be the smallest claim an entity could have.) She gave her take in an excerpt from a December *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece:

> [The pro-life] view treats microscopic cells with no past or present consciousness, no organs or tissues, as people. A vocal minority of Americans, of course, do find compelling the argument that a fertilized egg is someone who deserves protection from harm. . . . But most Americans don't believe we should sacrifice the lives and well being of actual people to save cells. Human identity must rest on something more compelling than the right string of proteins in a petri dish, detectable only with high-tech equipment. We will never get a moral consensus that a single cell, or a clump of 100 cells, is a human being. That definition defies moral sense, rational argument, and several major religious traditions.

You can, perhaps, see the sketches of an argument here. Not, to my mind, a strong one. A morally significant fact, such as a being's having the ability to direct its own development, can always be redescribed in a way that hides its significance (e.g., "the right string of proteins"). From a certain perspective—a perspective that generally goes with support for the destruction of embryos, incidentally—all of us are merely big clumps of cells. We routinely use high-tech equipment to tell if someone has died or still has human identity.

What's most telling, however, is Postrel's nervous invocation of public opinion. She and her allies would never let public opinion dictate policy on reproductive cloning, since the public is overwhelmingly against it. In that case, the public's position has to submit to rigorous philosophical probing that (allegedly) reveals it to be based on aesthetic revulsion, religious dogma, etc. (Postrel's presentation of public opinion on therapeutic cloning, while fair, is also questionable: Poll findings on the subject are very dependent on the wording of the question, suggesting that public opinion is still forming.)

But Postrel offers more of an argument than Michael Lind does in the *Reason* symposium. He writes, "Unlike fetuses in a later stage of development in the womb, rudimentary human embryos consisting of a few dozen or a few hundred cells that have not been implanted in a womb cannot plausibly be defined as human beings. People who see no distinction between blastocysts and babies, far from being exemplary moralists, show an incapacity to draw an elementary moral distinction that destroys their claims to be taken seriously as moral thinkers." Q.E.D. Lind, whose failings do not include a reluctance to spell out his views in detail, supplies no further argument. Co-contributor Elizabeth Whelan is also content to rest on assertion.

Jonathan Rauch, in a *National Journal* essay posted on *Reason*'s website, also tries to respond to the argument that embryos are human beings (though he slightly misstates that argument) and that no end, however noble, can justify their killing. "To a great extent," he writes, "one has to just take or leave this argument. One must look at a blastocyst . . . and

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decide how one feels about it. To me, this ball of cells is much more than a fingernail clipping, but it is also much less than a human being. Speaking of it as a person or near-person does not preserve the dignity of human life; it trivializes it." The relevant considerations then boil down to which is less distasteful, "farming embryos" or letting people die of diseases that farming embryos could help cure. Rauch picks embryo-farming.

It's a handy form of argument. Let's apply it to another issue—say, gay marriage, for which Rauch is a thoughtful spokesman. An opponent could tell Rauch: "The case for gay marriage doesn't advance equality and the dignity of man; it trivializes it. One must look at gay couples and homosexual activity and decide how one feels about it. It sure doesn't look like marriage to me." The point is that Koertge was correct: Aesthetic impressions unbacked by philosophical reflection—just "looking at" something without thinking it through—are not enough in matters of moral consequence. Libertarians are keen to apply that idea, indeed in an extreme form, to the debate on reproductive cloning. They blithely throw it aside when it comes to therapeutic cloning. Insofar as their failure to engage their opponents' case makes it possible for them to do so, they are acting in accordance with Rawlsian public reason. But they are failing any more reasonable definition of public reason.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DISAGREEMENT

Libertarians have another tactic for avoiding actual engagement with the issues, and it too follows the Rawlsian playbook: the argument from disagreement. Bioethicist Ronald Green writes in the symposium, "The opponents [of cloning] are entitled to their views, but not all Americans share them. The real question is why their view of the moral status of this very early form of human life should trump others' equally sincere beliefs or health care needs." Ummm, how about because we're right and they're wrong? Libertarian feminist author Daphne Patai sounds the same note: "When politics or religion attempts to control science . . . we should all worry, for different political positions may find different research programs unsettling and how would we then resolve the ensuing conflicts?" How about by reasoning them through? The alternative is to say that the fact that A disagrees with B is a reason to compromise by taking A's position.

Molecular biologist Jeremy Peirce writes that "we have the right to determine our own actions and positions in matters of conscience like these, and binding a debatable opinion to a federal felony is inappropriate and foolish." Do we have this right? A formally identical right was asserted by slaveowners. The analogy is unfair only if slavery violated someone else's rights in a way that destroying human embryos does not—which is precisely the point at issue. The argument from disagreement is superfluous if Peirce is right to think that destroying embryos is no big deal, and it fails if he's wrong.

Biophysicist Gregory Stock, who heads UCLA's program on medical technology and society, makes a different version of the argument: Given that we have laws that seem not to treat embryos as living human beings worthy of protection (permissive abortion laws, laws that let in vitro fertilization clinics discard "surplus" human embryos), he asks, How can we ban therapeutic cloning?

If Stock means that no one can logically support both policies, he is wrong: It is possible to support legal abortion without denying that fetuses are living human beings. Their claims could be judged to be real, but trumped by the bodily integrity of the pregnant women. (There are good reasons for rejecting this judgment, but that's not the point here.) The Supreme Court is certainly capable of making this distinction, if that's what he is getting at: It views abortion in light of a putative right of women to decide whether to "bear or beget" children—obviously not at issue in therapeutic cloning—and it has cautioned against treating this and similar alleged rights at too high a level of abstraction.

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The fact that the premises behind a pro-life position have unpopular implications for other issues is not an argument against that position.

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To the extent that there is genuine inconsistency between allowing abortion and outlawing therapeutic cloning, that is no reason for pro-lifers to abandon their opposition to both. The fact that several states have anti-sodomy laws on the books is no reason for gay-rights advocates not to push for legal protection from discrimination in those states. Both gay-rights and pro-life advocates can also, in good conscience, pick their battles. The fact that the premises behind a pro-life position (like opposition to therapeutic cloning) have unpopular implications for other issues (say, abortion) is not an argument against that position. Most supporters of abortion—Peter Singer famously excepted—aren't willing to fight for infanticide, although their argument plainly tends in that direction. Most supporters of therapeutic cloning aren't willing to fight for reproductive cloning just now, either. To say that for a policy to be legitimate a polity must for good reasons endorse it, the premises behind it, and all other policies to which the premises logically lead, is to set the bar high—higher even than Rawlsian public reason does, and far higher than is realistic for a polity composed of imperfect human beings.

TWIN SPIN

The people who openly argue for both types of cloning deserve credit for candor, but the arguments they're making create a problem for them. *Reproductive* cloning is said to be nothing to frighten us because a clone just makes a twin of whoever is being cloned. Libertarians appear to think this is a knock-down argument: "To my knowledge no one has argued that twins are immoral," Bailey writes. The destruction of embryos in *therapeutic* cloning, meanwhile, is said to be okay because the embryos are at such an early stage of development that twinning is still possible. Since the embryo could become two embryos, it's not an individual.

Both arguments from twinning are vulnerable to serious objection. But what's more important—although the libertarians are wholly oblivious to it—is that the arguments collide head-on. We're not supposed to worry about reproductive cloning because it just makes twins. But at the same time, it's

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okay to kill a human entity so long as it's possible for a twin to be derived from it. Since all of us can in theory be cloned at any age, and a clone is just like a twin, that seems to leave all of us without any ground to protest being killed. Which I, for one, resent.

Even without their twin arguments about twins, the libertarians can't come up with a defensible line past which killing someone is wrong. If research that involved the killing of five-year-olds had the potential to generate massive health benefits, why would it be wrong in principle to proceed? Most of the objections to a cloning ban that appeared in the symposium would apply with equal force to a ban on such research. The latter ban would "criminalize scientific research," override the individual consciences of scientists, and so "insult and demean" them. It would leave valuable knowledge unlearned. And—to mention another trope of the symposium—it would lead the research to move to other countries where the kids would be treated even worse.

In a debate on National Review Online, Bailey admitted that he doesn't "claim to know precisely when human life begins"—i.e., at what point it becomes a no-no to kill human beings for their spare parts—but added that "it certainly begins well after the blastocyst stage of embryonic development." So it's definitely okay to kill a human being in the first two weeks of development. And afterward? He'll have to get back to us about that.

FOR A PRO-LIFE LIBERTARIANISM

The alternative view—the one I hold, as the reader will have guessed—is that conception, or the simulation thereof that is cloning, creates a new human being: a self-contained organism, not a part of another human being like a sperm or egg cell. This being is valuable simply because it is a human being and not because of any traits—sentience, hair, the ability to protect itself—that it happens to possess. (Technically, of course, the "it" is wrong here.) It is a person from the first moment, rather than a mere body that becomes inhabited by a person as it develops (which would imply an untenable person-body dualism). You were once an embryonic human person. To kill that embryonic person would have been to kill you—an unjust act then, as it would be now, and an act that should be illegal then as now, no matter what benefits might come from it.

Further, I suspect that whether life begins at conception would not even be a question if we did not have interests—e.g., a desire for medical breakthroughs or fear of the burdens of pregnancy and parenthood—in denying the proposition. If we had no incentives to kill an embryo (but had today's medical knowledge), I doubt we would question that it is wrong to do so.

Finally, I think everything I've written here is actually compatible with libertarianism. Libertarians believe, after all, that the purpose of government is to protect people from aggression. If cloned embryos are people, the state should protect them from being killed. Libertarianism furnishes no premises for judging whether cloned embryos, or human embryos generally, are people. That's why there are libertarians in good standing—a minority, to be sure—who want abortion outlawed. They can oppose therapeutic cloning, too. (It is true that these pro-life positions are incompatible with libertarianism if it is understood as a rule demanding state inaction in the presence of moral disagreement. But that rule is a plainly ridiculous foundation for libertarianism—try applying it to slavery.)

Opponents of a federal ban on therapeutic cloning make one final argument: Even if all the foregoing is correct, the Constitution doesn't give the federal government the power to ban it. As Notre Dame law professor Gerard Bradley testified before a House judiciary subcommittee, however, a ban aimed at preventing an interstate traffic in connection with human cloning is compatible with the last major statement on the commerce clause by the Supreme Court: the 1995 *Lopez* case, which tightened the limits on federal power. But a plausible case could be made that even the *Lopez* Court didn't set those limits tightly enough. The best constitutional warrant for a ban is the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection of the laws to all persons and gives Congress authority to enforce that guarantee. Under that amendment (which is not to be confused with judicial interpretations of it), Congress may decide that a ban on therapeutic cloning is required to protect one class of persons.

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You were once an embryonic human person. To kill that embryonic person would have been to kill you—an unjust act then, as it would be now.

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Up until now, I've concentrated on therapeutic rather than reproductive cloning. Therapeutic cloning is what's actually in contention in Congress. Both supporters and opponents of therapeutic cloning seem to agree that reproductive cloning is the worse of the two, so the debate centers on the former. But another reason for my emphasis is that I think, contrary to the prevailing assumption, that therapeutic cloning is *less* defensible than reproductive cloning, because the former involves the killing of a human being and the latter does not.

A federal ban on reproductive cloning raises trickier issues of morality, of political philosophy, and of constitutional interpretation than does a federal ban on therapeutic cloning. I lean toward a ban on reproductive cloning, although for reasons that may not be compatible with any sort of libertarianism.

Nick Gillespie, *Reason*'s current editor, recently wrote an interesting essay on libertarianism vs. conservatism in which he observed, in passing, that "*National Review* conservatism . . . seems to groan" at "every new development in genetic engineering." The charge is untrue: NR cheered the prospective benefits from cloning pigs in the last issue. *Reason* libertarianism does, unfortunately, celebrate every new development in biotechnology. Surely our obligation is to use reason to distinguish between welcome and unwelcome developments—the latter including those that involve violations of sound moral principles. (Some of those violations are not at all new in type, like homicide.) Undoubtedly, biotechnology is going to raise a lot of questions in coming decades that are more difficult than whether to bring new human beings into the world in order to kill them for medical purposes. We are unlikely to be well guided through them by people who can't even get the easy questions right. **NR**

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InDigestible

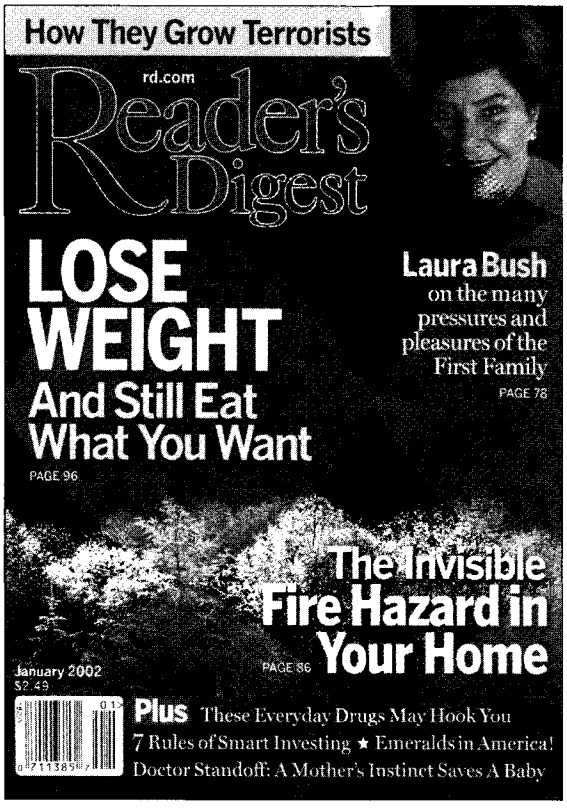
The decline of a great magazine

JOHN J. MILLER

THERE'S probably no agreeing on precisely when *Reader's Digest* took a turn for the worse. There was the move last year to stick a celebrity photograph on the cover of every issue, rather than the picture of an ordinary American whose story of heroism would inspire readers. Two years earlier, there was the magazine's redesign, which elevated graphics and visuals to a place of importance that previously had been reserved for the power of the written word. Around the same time, the magazine dropped its familiar slogan promising "Thirty-one articles each month . . . Each article of enduring value and interest." There aren't 31 articles each month anymore—the February 2002 issue has only 15—and most of those that remain sure aren't of enduring value and interest, either.

It's a saddening transformation, and one that must especially upset conservatives, who seem able to do little more than sit by the bed of a good friend in the throes of a terminal illness. *Reader's Digest* was not only the greatest and most popular magazine of the 20th century, it was also a steady ally. Monthly celebrations of traditional American values, staunch anti-Communism during the Cold War, and an optimistic philosophy of moral and personal aspiration made it stand out in the lowest-common-denominator world of magazine publishing. In an unwitting tribute to the *Digest*'s success and influence, the Left loathed it. Conservatives of all stripes—and perhaps most importantly, the unpoliticized, small-c conservatives of the heartland—cherished it. The *Digest* was the quintessential magazine of "red-state" America—those broad swaths of the country colored red for George W. Bush on 2000 Election Night maps, as opposed to blue for Al Gore.

Reader's Digest remained an outstanding magazine well into the 1990s, but much has changed in just the last three or four years. Editorial quality was sacrificed to a mix of poor personnel decisions and cost-cutting maneuvers. The *Digest* simply isn't what it used to be. There are still occasional flashes of the old excellence, but now these increasingly rare moments double as disturbing reminders of how much has been lost.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'A saddening transformation'

A MAGAZINE FOR MOST EVERYBODY

Founded in 1922 by DeWitt and Lila Wallace, *Reader's Digest* became what the *Wall Street Journal* was to call "the greatest publishing success since the Bible." The Wallaces printed only 5,000 copies of their first issue, but their circulation soon skyrocketed. By the 1930s, they owned the most popular magazine in the United States and were beginning to reach around the globe. Today the *Digest* claims 12.5 million subscribers in this country—down from an all-time high of 18 million in the 1970s, but still an industry leader—and a grand total of 95 million readers who see one of its 48 editions published in 19 different languages.

The *Digest* was special for a number of reasons. Just as today's Internet users rely on search engines to mine the best sources of information on the web, subscribers to *Reader's Digest* could count on the Wallaces and their team to locate the best articles in a sea of periodicals and reproduce them in condensed form. Eventually, about half the magazine consisted of original material. The *Digest* displayed great variety and range; each issue had something in it for everybody, from a mother seeking health tips to a father interested in tax cuts to a teenager thrilled by real-life adventure stories. Behind the whole enterprise was a typically American belief in self-improvement that managed to find an audience not just in the U.S., but everywhere. *Reader's Digest* honored individuals and their achievements—usually ordinary people who did extraordinary things.

During the Cold War, the *Digest* played a vital role in educating the American public about Communism. Friedrich Hayek once said the success of his landmark book *The Road to Serfdom* came from the fact that DeWitt Wallace decided to publish a condensed version in the magazine. In the 1970s and '80s, intrepid reporter John Barron broke one story after another about Soviet malfeasance around the globe. Defectors often told their tales first in the pages of the *Digest*. This infuriated the anti-anti-Communists, but even some of them had to acknowledge the *Digest*'s achievement. In 1982, Susan Sontag sparked a bristling controversy on the left with this confession: "Imagine, if you will, someone who read only *Reader's Digest* between 1950 and 1970, and someone in the same period who read only *The Nation* or *The New Statesman*. Which

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reader would have been better informed about the realities of Communism? The answer, I think, should give us pause. Can it be that our enemies were right?"

The magazine also served more broadly as a platform for conservative ideas. It published articles in favor of small government and missile defense and opposed to union corruption and welfare dependency. Much of its work in these areas was groundbreaking. In 1995, the *Digest* commissioned a poll showing that majorities of people from all walks of life—even self-identified liberal Democrats—believed nobody's total tax burden should exceed 25 percent of his income. Great magazines often find themselves ahead of the news cycle, and in 1998 Kenneth Timmerman wrote a prescient story called "This Man Wants You Dead." The subject was Osama bin Laden, and it hit the newsstands right before the fatal embassy bombings in Africa.

Hard-news stories such as these were not always the magazine's most popular features, according to the detailed reader surveys the *Digest* studied every month. Yet they had a distinct following and lent ballast to the whole enterprise. "Sometimes a magazine must lead," says William Schulz, the longtime Washington bureau chief responsible for so many of these noteworthy articles. "We never pandered to people based on what a focus group told us to do."

From its headquarters north of New York City (the address is Pleasantville, but it's really in Chappaqua, present home of the Clintons), *Reader's Digest* remained distant from the fads and trends of the general publishing world. Astonishing commercial success unrivalled by anything else in the business also helped it stand apart. The Wallaces lived well, but grew embarrassed by the vast riches they accumulated. They had no children of their own, and until their deaths in the early 1980s, they lavished parental devotion on the people who worked for them. The *Digest* became famous for cushy jobs full of perks, from free turkeys at Thanksgiving to rides home in a limousine for employees who weren't feeling well. The positions were well paid, too; the *Digest* never crimped on expenses.

Yet one of the *Digest*'s great strengths—its isolation from the buzz of Manhattan—was simultaneously a weakness. It often didn't get the credit it deserved for its journalism. "I can't tell you how many times I've seen our work appear on television or elsewhere without attribution," says deputy editor William P. Beamon. The *Digest* simply wasn't hip, cool, or glamorous. "For decades, the intellectuals have looked down on the masses," says Schulz. "They've viewed *Reader's Digest* as lowbrow."

BOTH A MAGAZINE AND A BUSINESS

The parent company of *Reader's Digest*—called the Reader's Digest Association—owed everything to the magazine, but the magazine was not in fact the company's primary cash cow. A subscription simply served as a gateway to a wide range of other Reader's Digest products, such as books and records. The magazine itself was expensive to produce, with its blank-check reporting and close editorial attention. It functioned as a kind of loss leader for everything else.

This model worked well for a long time, but the company began to falter in the 1990s as it faced new challenges from competitors using sophisticated targeting software to boost their own mail-order businesses. Reader's Digest started to lose ground technologically, and the problem was compounded by a legislative crackdown on sweepstakes, the main device by which the magazine had attracted new subscribers. (The practice bordered on deception, as it tricked many people into believing that buying a subscription would increase their odds of winning a prize.) Profitability sank, leading to intense pressure to cut costs throughout the company. The magazine's free-spending ways came under severe scrutiny. There was an additional concern, which in some quarters verged on an obsession, that the *Digest*'s readers were too old—a demographic dead-end in a society increasingly dominated by boomers. The rise of niche media also took a toll, as general-interest magazines such as *Life* died off. The *Digest* has survived, but continues to be battered.

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Hard-news stories—among the first to go—had a distinct following and lent ballast to the whole enterprise.

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Every magazine changes over time, and *Reader's Digest* clearly needed to improve its economic performance. Yet the company burned through four CEOs in the mid 1990s, creating turmoil that badly damaged the magazine's editorial side. The talented editor Kenneth Tomlinson quit in 1996. Many consider him the magazine's last great editor. "He really understood what the *Digest* is all about," says one former staffer. Most of the magazine's top editors had been Tomlinson hires, and virtually all of them were, like Tomlinson himself, political conservatives.

Christopher Willcox, also a conservative, replaced Tomlinson—but he was immediately forced into a round of belt-tightening. The editorial staff was reduced, much of it by way of natural attrition and forced retirements. Morale dropped sharply. Today there is a vigorous debate among current and former *Digest* employees (some two dozen of whom were consulted for this article) about Willcox's role in the magazine's decline. Some say it began on his watch, while others describe him as a last-ditch defender of the *Digest*'s tried-and-true ways. Whatever the truth, Willcox set in motion a series of significant editorial changes. He moved the table of contents off its familiar place on the front cover and boosted the magazine's visual impact. The overall number of *Digest* stories began to drop, with the expensive hard-news stories among the first to go. "If there were three political articles in every issue, Willcox took it down to two," complains one former editor. "He cared more about look than content. He didn't do much to maintain standards."

Willcox was more responsive to the marketers' demographic hand-wringing than Tomlinson had been, but the corporate side of the magazine never took to him—and

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especially not Thomas O. Ryder, an American Express executive who became CEO in 1998. In January 2000, Ryder finally moved against Willcox by creating a brand-new position at *Reader's Digest*: editor-in-chief of the Reader's Digest Association—i.e., the whole company—which outranked Willcox's job as editor-in-chief of the magazine. Ryder hired Eric Schrier from *Time*'s health-publications division to fill it, and Willcox resigned less than two months later. Schrier effectively served as the magazine's top editor for the next year and a half.

Reader's Digest generally had elevated its top editors from within the magazine. Both Tomlinson and Willcox had spent years working for the *Digest* before their promotions. They understood what several current and former Pleasantville insiders call "*Reader's Digest* values," in part because these values had shaped their professional careers. Schrier, however, was an outsider hired at a time when the magazine was letting go of some of its most seasoned editors. He was a competent magazine professional, but *Reader's Digest* had always wanted something more than technical skill; it wanted a particular worldview, plus an understanding and appreciation of why that worldview resonated with millions of people in the United States and abroad. "Schrier has no sense of the magazine's history," complains one former editor. The new editor was different in other ways, too. Each of his predecessors—going back before Tomlinson to the days of Ken Gilmore in the 1980s and founder DeWitt Wallace himself—was a known conservative. Yet Schrier is a political mystery. People who work with him daily don't know his views on fundamental issues. "My opinions are a private matter," he says.

If the overt conservatism of the traditional *Digest* began to recede under Willcox, it took a nosedive under Schrier. When Willcox introduced a new design for the magazine with the May 1998 issue, he divided the table of contents into different headings, with hard-news pieces tending to appear in a section labeled "Currents." That issue featured a piece by Michael Barone critical of bilingual education (right before California's crucial vote on Prop. 227), another by Trevor Armbrister on the unintended consequences of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and a blistering Michael Kelly column reprinted from the *Washington Post* on Bill Clinton's lies (this was during the Monica Lewinsky scandal). From a conservative reader's standpoint, this was pretty satisfying stuff. It didn't last. Exactly three years later—in the May 2001 issue—stories listed under "Currents" included "So Tiny, So Sweet . . . So Mean: Hummingbirds will do anything to get their next meal" and a consumer-tip piece headlined, "Should Your Next Camera Be Digital?" (There is now no "Currents" section at all.)

Editorial downsizing continued after Willcox's departure, but Schrier went on hiring more outsiders. Jacob Young, who is said by some to be openly hostile to *Digest* traditions, arrived from *People* and is now executive editor. Catherine Romano, a number-two editor at both *Cosmopolitan* and *Maxim*—magazines about half a step removed from soft porn—signed on as deputy editor. Schrier also created the new position of West Coast editor, whose job is to develop celebrity profiles. And in December, a new editor-in-chief of the magazine appeared on the masthead: Jacqueline Leo, another New York publishing professional with no previous connection to the *Digest*. In short, the magazine of red-state America is now run almost totally by blue-state Americans.

A few conservatives remain, most notably Schulz—though he recently stepped down as the Washington bureau chief and is now called editor-at-large. "The kind of politics Ken Tomlinson represented is abhorrent to the current leadership," says one editor no longer affiliated with the *Digest*. "There are a few genuine conservatives left behind, but they're hold-outs, like Japanese soldiers still fighting for the emperor at the end of 1945."

■

The magazine of red-state America is now run almost totally by blue-state Americans.

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Personnel is policy, of course, and these dramatic staff changes have led to a shakeup in the magazine's content. The February 2002 issue, for instance, has a picture of Meg Ryan on the cover—and inside there's a ten-page interview with her, which can only be described as vacuous. ("How do you feel about turning 40?") The back cover features a photo of "Alaska's all-girl rescue squad," which links inside to an unspectacular story of low-grade feminism. A package of stories on terrorism breaks no new ground; they read like consumer-advice columns. (If a "nuclear suitcase device" goes off in your neighborhood, you are warned to "stay indoors.") There's a good story on a tough judge in Alabama—an old-school *Digest* piece—but it's short and lonely. "That's Outrageous," a popular feature that calls attention to bureaucratic abuse and cultural rot, has been reduced in size, and may not even exist in a couple of months, according to magazine insiders. Another semi-regular department, "Mugged by the Law," already has gone extinct. Instead of hard-news stories, there is a wealth of what the magazine professionals call "short commitment" pieces—mini articles that don't take much time to read or much thought to process.

Very little is special about the current issue, both in the sense that so much of its content is instantly forgettable and in the sense that it's not much different from other recent issues. The last time a celebrity didn't appear on the cover of the *Digest*, a magazine that once honored ordinary Americans in almost everything it did, was March 2001. Since then, the cover has been a parade ground for beautiful people, including Muhammad Ali, Tom Hanks, and Princess Diana. The *Digest*'s distinct voice is falling silent; the once-mighty magazine is becoming indistinguishable from the swarm of other publications that genuflect to the stars of Hollywood, offer new diet recipes for women, and produce nothing of enduring value or interest. **NR**

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NOT OVER MY DEAD BODY WILL I EVER RAISE TAXES

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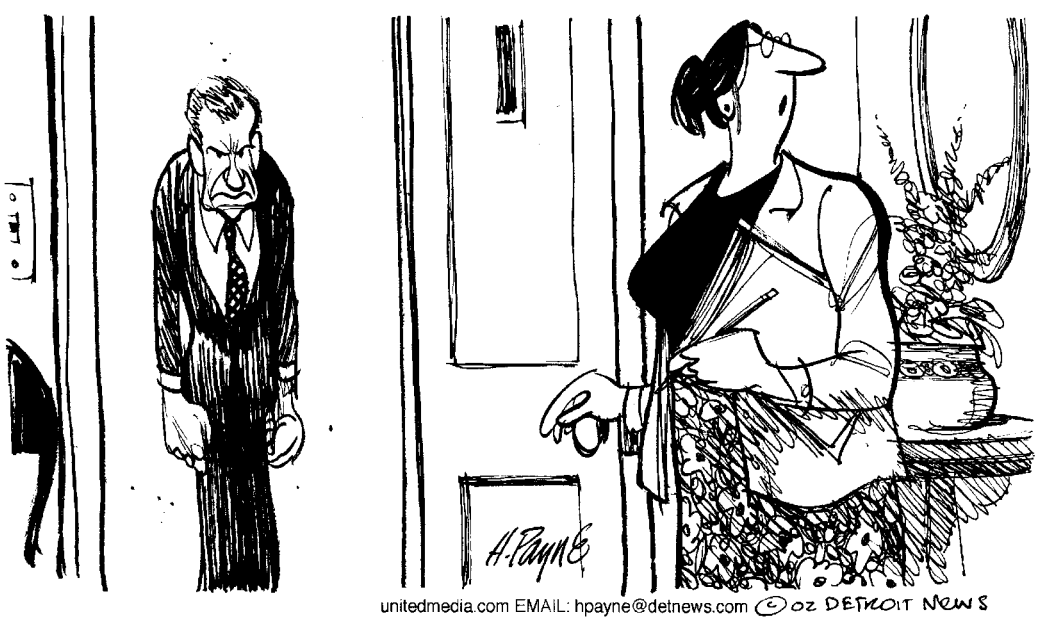
"I hope Your Honor will take into account the fact that my client had a values-free public education."

THEY WERE AN ITEM

It wasn't wine and roses, but
The education bill
That so besotted Teddy and
Left George lovesick—until
The former hit the latter like
An SUV when he
Blew spitballs at the tax cuts; now
They meet, but sparingly.

—W. H. VON DREELE



"IT'S SENATOR DASCHLE, DEAR! HE WANTS OUR TAX REBATE CHECK BACK BEFORE WE DO ANY MORE DAMAGE TO THE U.S. ECONOMY."

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THE LONG VIEW

By Rob Long

Great Moments from *The Arthur Andersen Story*

From page 78, "The 1920s: The Bull Charges"

> . . . don't know what the term "overvalued" means in the first place. Shares, by our meticulous analysis and investigation, are, if anything, undervalued. In our capacity as the "Keeper of the Nation's Books," we can aver with unmitigated confidence that American business is in robust health, and that the 1930s will be a decade of unparalleled growth. Indeed, as early as the autumn of 1929, according to our forecast, the American economy should explode with prosperity . . .

From page 121, "The 1930s: The Weimar Miracle"

> . . . leads us to our unqualified enthusiasm for the new government and its fiscal strength. Of course, the Great War damaged many of the businesses that built Kaiser Wilhelm's powerhouse, but the ink wasn't dry on the Versailles Treaty before the new government of Germany got down to the hard work of stabilizing and strengthening the currency, and we can report to you today that the German mark is the bedrock on which the future of Germany can be built. Our exhaustive audit of the country's finances makes us almost giddy with optimism . . .

From page 204, "The 1940s: Mr. Roosevelt's Lasting Legacy"

> . . . from the statistical standpoint, then, there's nothing at all to worry about. The population will, as our research shows, continue to sustain the new Social Security Administration indefinitely. Using the latest actuarial information, and applying our well-known no-nonsense skepticism, we're confident that the Social Security Administration is built upon a granite-like financial foundation. Our advice to the Americans of the future is to forget saving for retirement—the Social Security Administration will provide all the savings necessary for a healthy and happy . . .

From page 289, "The 1950s: TV's Shining Star, The DuMont Network"

> . . . tired offerings of NBC and CBS. The new television network, owned and operated by the DuMont Corporation, has already responded nimbly to the changing entertainment environment in post-war America. Hungry for more variety in their programming, thousands of American families are tuning their television dials to the DuMont Network's embarrassment of riches. Musical programs and comic fare round out a schedule of exciting westerns and educational presentations, all sure to capture the attention---and viewing loyalty—of a new generation of Americans. A careful and thorough audit of the company's financial strength paints a rosy, unblemished picture of a golden and prosperous future, and investors would be wise to purchase as many shares as . . .

From page 438, "The 1960s: The Great American Hat"

> . . . his youthful good looks, pleasing Boston accent, and vigorous energy. The president has, until now, not been an especially ardent hat-wearer, and yet our recent painstaking audit of The American Hat Company—done with our usual care and relentless pursuit of precision—leads us to believe that the 1960s will be known as "The Hat Decade." According to our calculations, The American Hat Company has recorded a whopping 23,987 % increase in hat sales in the months since the Kennedy inauguration, suggesting that a hat-mania is sweeping the country. While this means that the 1960s are sure to be a staid, somewhat subdued decade, it also suggests . . .

From page 776, "The 1970s: The Everlasting DeLorean"

> . . . famous for his provocative designs—including the Ford Mustang, among others—is bringing his design flair and financial wizardry to a new venture, one we're proud to serve as auditor and chief accountant. The sleek, smooth look of his signature car is matched only by the solidity and dependability of DeLorean's financial base. According to our painstaking audit, DeLorean Motor Company has managed to return a whopping 93,987 % profit—before even releasing a product. Clearly, this is a company that is here to stay, and in our opinion, is an investment worth its weight in . . .

From page 800, "The 1980s: *Ishtar*: The Movie of the Decade"

> . . . a collaboration of luminaries can only mean one thing: a blockbuster hit. After a complete top-to-bottom review of the studio's cash-flow and profit statements, we can assure investors that *Ishtar* will be an "evergreen" cash cow for the foreseeable . . .

From page 852, "The 1990s: E-Toys and WebVan: Rock-Solid Finances for Rock-Solid Companies"

> . . . in many ways symbolize the promise of the "New Economy." Both companies boast large advertising budgets and both have recently purchased large sports arenas, which, in our long experience, signals solidity and dependability. Our by-now trademark auditing techniques—carefully and thoroughly reviewing each document, invoice, or receipt before individually and precisely shredding it—reveal that both companies have the cash flow necessary to sustain any economic condition. Both continue to show explosive growth in the areas of advertising expenditure and executive compensation, which is enough for us, and both assure us that their lack of profit, in the traditional sense, is merely a question of semantics . . .

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Tackling Bias

LOU CANNON

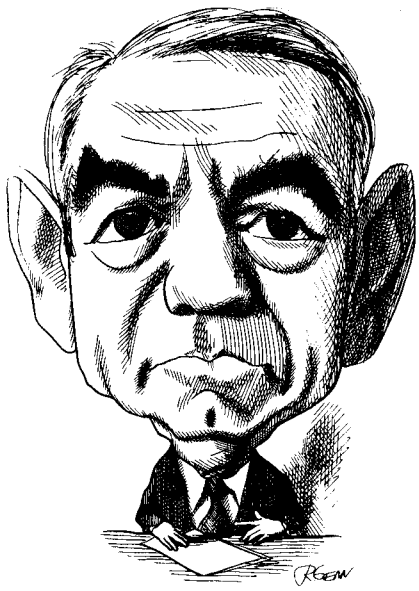
Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News, by Bernard Goldberg (Regnery, 232 pp., $27.95)

AWARD-WINNING CBS correspondent Bernard Goldberg became an instant outcast at his network when, on February 13, 1996, he published an article in the *Wall Street Journal* accusing a colleague of one-sided reporting. In his *Journal* piece, Goldberg said the work of CBS's Eric Engberg exemplified the "liberal bias" of network news.

On a "reality check" segment of the *CBS Evening News*, Engberg had ridiculed the flat-tax proposal of presidential candidate Steve Forbes. Goldberg assailed Engberg for quoting only opponents of the flat tax, among them an unnamed economist who suggested the plan should be tested in Albania. Engberg's report concluded with a David Letterman-type parody, in which Engberg declared that "Forbes's Number One Wackiest Flat-Tax Promise" was his contention that it would give parents "more time to spend with their children and each other."

I never saw Engberg's commentary; assuming that Goldberg describes it accurately, its economic ignorance is even more blatant than its bias. Engberg said the flat tax was "called supply-side economics under President Reagan," a misleading shorthand that should have set off alarm bells at CBS. It didn't. Goldberg believes that this is because CBS producers—and anchorman Dan Rather—are so reflexively liberal (and anti-flat tax) that it never occurred to them that the piece might be unfair.

Mr. Cannon is a veteran newspaper reporter and the author of several books, the latest of which is *Ronald Reagan: The Presidential Portfolio.*



Dan Rather by Roman Genn

After Goldberg's column appeared, network luminaries, including CBS News president Andrew Heyward, complained that Goldberg was disloyal because he had expressed his opinions outside of CBS. Goldberg, who had worked for CBS since 1972, was kept on the payroll but disappeared from public view. He was so rarely seen on television that one admirer sent him a picture of a milk carton and asked him to paste his picture on it. (He was eventually put back on *48 Hours*.)

Goldberg professes to be surprised that his colleagues (except the untouchable Andy Rooney, who wrote him a letter of support) regarded him as a "traitor" for writing the column. But whistleblowers are frequently treated as pariahs by those on whom they blow the whistle. For most Americans, loyalty to the team is a defining virtue; Goldberg knows this, and seems a bit uncomfortable with his apostasy. In his new book, Goldberg has a chapter on the "News Mafia," in which he compares himself to a mob member who cooperates with the authorities. (He casts anchorman Rather—"The Dan"—as the counterpart to TV's Tony Soprano.) When it comes to the "biggest sin" of telling others about the family business, writes Goldberg, "*there is no difference—no difference, whatsoever!*—between the wise guys who operate in the dark shadows of the underworld and the news guys who supposedly operate in the bright sunlight." Actually, there is an important difference: The Mafia kills members who talk. The bad guys at CBS, by Goldberg's account, kept him off the air and allowed him to stick around on full salary until he became eligible for his CBS pension on May 31, 2000, and took a job with HBO.

As a reporter who worked for the *Washington Post* nearly as long (26 years) as Goldberg did for CBS, I started reading his book with great anticipation: The deficiencies of network news need to be exposed, and this book offered an excellent opportunity to do it. Until the valiant and often brilliant performance of the networks in dealing with September 11 and its aftermath, television news was often slothful, slanted, and trivial; regrettably, Goldberg's book doesn't do justice to the problem, and must be marked down as an opportunity missed.

Goldberg seems to share my distaste for tabloid television; I say "seems" because he equates the sagas of Tonya Harding, Lorena Bobbitt, and Joey Buttafuoco with that of Elián González, of whom he writes: "I know so much about Elián González that for weeks before it finally happened, I was rooting for the U.S. government to send him back to Fidel Castro's Communist dictatorship, just so I wouldn't have to listen to his cousin Marisleysis anymore." This offhand comment—suggesting as it does a certain insouciance about what was, after all, a foreign-policy story of considerable significance—points to the unevenness

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that is the book's major flaw. Goldberg begins the book with a transparent joke about how his liberal friends are planning to celebrate its publication; a page later, he dismisses it as a "cheap attempt to be funny." This fitful beginning sets the tone for a book that is too often sarcastic when it ought to be serious.

Bias does, however, have its moments. Goldberg's best story is an account of what happened in 1993 when he suggested that CBS do a segment—on one of its magazine shows—examining the network's own bias. Heyward, then the show's executive producer, reluctantly agreed, but said Goldberg could only interview Rather if he agreed not to ask him any "tough questions." Goldberg then dropped the idea of doing a segment on CBS's bias.

Goldberg says that Heyward went on to admit that "of course, there's a liberal bias in the news" and to say that he would deny it if Goldberg ever repeated their conversation. (Heyward has declined comment on the book.) It's a great story, but on its very face, Goldberg's account of Heyward's admission contradicts the book's basic thesis—which is that liberal culture at CBS is so ingrained that it goes unrecognized. For example, the book depicts Rather as particularly resistant to any suggestion that he has any bias. Goldberg claims to like Rather, but it is hard to see why he would care for someone he portrays as untrustworthy, ruthless, and resistant to even the mildest criticism. Goldberg would be more believable if he frankly acknowledged that he is trying to settle scores. Instead, sounding remarkably like Dan Rather, he denies it. "Staring at a blank page on a computer screen for hours and hours and hours is not the most efficient way to be vindictive," he writes. (True, but it's also not the most efficient way to write a book.)

Goldberg's *Wall Street Journal* column bothered his bosses because he made a compelling case; his book will pose much less of a threat to them. It relies largely on data compiled by others to assert that CBS, NBC, and ABC have a liberal slant because journalists at these networks are disproportionately liberal, Democratic, and feminist. It's a familiar sermon, one that will be most convincing to those already sitting in the choir. Those with more agnostic views about news bias are likely to require more documentation to be convinced.

A model of such documentation was provided last February on National Public Radio by L. Brent Bozell, who observed that one of Bill Clinton's first presidential acts was to scrap an executive order of Ronald Reagan prohibiting U.S. funding for international agencies that subsidize or promote abortion. When George W. Bush became president, he reverted to the Reagan policy. Both presidents were carrying out campaign promises, but Bush's action was described by ABC anchor Peter Jennings as "taking a tough line on abortion" and Clinton's as "keep[ing] his word on abortion rights." Similar comparisons of network reporting on other hot-button issues—my candidate would be missile defense—might make the case for a pattern of bias that Goldberg simply assumes into evidence.

■

Goldberg says Heyward admitted that 'of course, there's a liberal bias in the news.'

■

In painting his picture of journalistic unfairness, Goldberg uses a broad, sloppy brush. He asserts, for example, that Reagan was depicted on television as "the embodiment of the greedy 1980s"; but he is mistaken in believing that Reagan suffered on the network news. To the contrary, Reagan was so skilled in taking advantage of the camera (and so well liked by many of those who covered him) that Democrats often complained they weren't getting a fair shake. I covered Reagan in all his campaigns and throughout his presidency, and heard more complaints from outsiders that we were "too soft" on him than that we were "too hard." We probably erred in both directions, but some of us were fairer than others. One of the fairest was White House correspondent Bill Plante, who was respected by Reagan and Reagan's critics alike. Plante reports for CBS.

Goldberg does better when he sticks to what he has observed. He tells an appalling story of an incident in which a producer on the *CBS Evening News* was reprimanded for a story about an Alabama chain gang in which all but one prisoner was black. The pictures illustrating the story accurately reflected the racial make-up of the chain gang, but the CBS brass worried that blacks might object and change the channel. This is an example of commercial, not liberal, bias; indeed, "cowardice" might be a more accurate word than "bias."

Late in his book, after repeatedly equating the big three network anchors, Goldberg salutes Jennings for telling the *Boston Globe*: "Conservative voices in the U.S. have not been as present as they might have been and should have been in the media." Goldberg agrees, and his book makes a strong case for political diversity in newsrooms. But Goldberg has also told Howard Kurtz of the *Washington Post*: "Does anyone think a 'diverse' group of conservative journalists would give us the news straight? I sure as hell don't. They'd be just like the Left." I suspect that Goldberg's confusion reflects contradictory premises that he has not thought through. At times, he views all reporting as opinion, and suggests that balance can be achieved by making newsrooms more representative. At other times, he opts for the tradition of "objective journalism," which requires journalists to set aside personal opinions and apply professional standards to their coverage.

Most journalists of Goldberg's generation, including me, prefer the professional remedy. I never found it difficult to be fair to Hubert Humphrey or Ronald Reagan (or George McGovern or Barry Goldwater), honorable men with different ideas. My guess is that this is also true of Goldberg, a television journalist of considerable attainment. The premise of the *Journal* column that made him a CBS outcast was not partisan or ideological: It was a complaint that the smear of the flat tax (and Forbes) violated elemental standards of journalistic fairness.

I cheered Goldberg's column because it so effectively made mincemeat of biased reporting. I wish I could cheer this book. Perhaps now that Goldberg has expressed his pent-up feelings about his former colleagues, he'll write a thoughtful sequel that lives up to the promise of this book. **NR**

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Mind Games

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline, by Richard A. Posner (Harvard, 408 pp., $29.95)

THE decline of public intellectuals announced in Richard Posner's new book must have been a mighty precipitous thing. For the term "public intellectual" was popularized only in 1987, when UCLA historian Russell Jacoby used it to describe academics who pontificate on passing political issues for a general audience. The problem with such thinkers, for Posner as for Jacoby, is that they embody the modern university's weaknesses without drawing on its strengths. People attracted to scholarship today tend to be leeched of idiosyncrasy in the "Ph.D. mill," cosseted by tenure (or cowed by the lack of it), sheltered from other disciplines by overspecialization, and drilled in an idiom that is gobbledygook to non-academics. Their only compensating advantage is the kind of formal accountability typified by peer review—which is precisely what public intellectuals flee when they join a shouting match on *Crossfire* or sign an "open letter" to the *New York Times* about, say, why the president shouldn't be impeached. At best, they do (in Posner's words) "what journalists would do, though perhaps with a lag"; at worst, they wind up mere entertainers, ideologues masquerading as experts.

Posner, a circuit-court judge and University of Chicago law professor, trains his rifle on a familiar barrel of fish. There's Paul Kennedy, with his Gorbachev-era warnings of American overstretch; Paul Ehrlich, who waited decades for a population explosion that never came; Lester Thurow, who prophesied that Japan's economy would lead the world, just months before it collapsed; Martin Feldstein, who predicted that the Clinton budget of 1993 would cause a recession; and Edward Luttwak, who foresaw "a bloody, grinding combat with thousands of casualties" in Iraq in 1991. For the most part, however, Posner is concerned with grinding axes and picking nits. He faults Arthur Schlesinger Jr., David Frum, and Thomas Nagel for (in their different ways) stressing privacy rather than obstruction of justice during the Clinton sex scandals. He flays *New York Times* economics columnist Paul Krugman, first for ignoring a paper on the history of typewriter ergonomics, then for mistaking the relevance of the Robinson-Patman Act to online pricing policy. If there were no more to his book than such trifles, it would resemble a hundred piece-of-my-mind editorials strung together, with no larger point.

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In this book, Posner crosses a line into the absurd.

■

But a larger point is just what Posner thinks he has. A pioneer of the "law and economics" movement, he views the public-intellectual field as an instance of "market failure." So he tries to subject it to a rigorous social-science analysis, breaking public-intellectual work into genres ("self-popularizing," "jeremiads," "real-time commentary," "politically inflected literary criticism," etc.) and assembling a "statistical profile of the modern public intellectual." Here, Posner crosses a line into the absurd.

Posner assembles his profile by feeding a list of intellectuals' names into Google and Nexis, and tallying up their mentions in media, websites, and scholarly literature between 1995 and 2000. The result is a league-table of the "top" thinkers of our time, in which, for instance, the law professor Jonathan Turley, by virtue of a few weeks' on-air bloviation about Bill Clinton in 1998, ranks just above W. H. Auden and Saul Bellow. Much of Posner's analysis of intellectual life rests on this exercise in garbage-in, garbage-out.

His choices as to who qualifies are also dubious; for example, Posner reckons it a "borderline case" whether Harvard president Lawrence Summers should count as a "public intellectual." Is he nuts? Whatever one thinks of Summers, his broadly respected academic work on late-20th-century mergers and buyouts is the foundation of corporate-finance policy for virtually all center-left parties in the Western world. Sidney Blumenthal, by contrast, prompts no such misgivings; by Posner's reckoning, he even ranks as the No. 5 public intellectual of our time. Posner makes no effort to distinguish between the web "hits" people get for their thinking and the hits they get for other things, but we can assume the lion's share of Blumenthal's 8,044 media mentions involve work in his chosen academic discipline: the study of what a psychopathic stalker that lying slut Monica Lewinsky was.

Since Posner purports to be covering foreign intellectuals (Anthony Giddens is here), where's Ulrich Beck? Adam Michnik? Norberto Bobbio? Zygmunt Bauman? Ralf Dahrendorf? Mario Vargas Llosa? Any one of these would have obtained more hits than the lower-ranking members of Posner's intellectual all-star team. Why is Stanley Fish on the list but not Helen Vendler? Posner actually has an answer to that one: He has decided to ignore purely "aesthetic" literary criticism, "as it does not contribute to public discourse on political or ideological matters." But that renders tautological his complaint that much public-intellectual activity is ideological cheerleading. And it still doesn't explain why the marginally political Philip Roth qualifies as a public intellectual while the marginally political John Updike does not.

The closer one looks at the list, the more arbitrary it appears. Posner's breakdown of public intellectuals—66 percent liberal, 43 percent Jewish, 16 percent foreign, 32 percent dead, average age 74, etc.—is meaningless, as are the calculations he bases on it. Posner seeks to show, for instance, that intellectuals who "have made serious errors in prediction or assessment" (John

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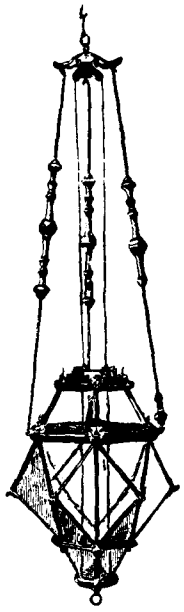
Kenneth Galbraith, Jean-Paul Sartre, et al.) have been punished as a result, seeing their media mentions rise only 40 percent between 1989 and 1999, versus 108 percent for a control group of those who did not make such errors. But here Posner commits the Blumenthal mistake again. In the "serious errors" category we have Robert Bork, whose media mentions fell from 848 in 1989 to 483 in 1999. But surely the spate of mentions in 1989 might have something to do with the aftermath of the most divisive Supreme Court nomination battle in American history? In the "control" sample we have Stephen Breyer, who got 20 hits in 1989 and 878 in 1999. Is it Breyer's avoidance of prognostication that holds the key here? Or is it maybe that he began the decade of the 1990s as an obscure law professor and ended it as a Supreme Court Justice?

Anyone who has wondered how Posner has managed to write more than a dozen books while holding down two challenging jobs will quickly unlock his secret: contempt for the reader. Posner makes certain points (on sexuality in Orwell's *1984*, for instance) a half-dozen times. He will introduce a personality (like John Stuart Mill's nemesis James Fitzjames Stephen) and then reintroduce him on the next page, as if for the first time. He doesn't say readers prefer pundits they agree with; he says, "Dislike of dubiety (Peirce's point) and herd instinct drive people to seek evidence that will confirm rather than disconfirm their priors (confirmation bias) . . ." Posner clearly has a capacious mind and a gift for aperçus—that Marxism was attractive to intellectuals because it was a "book-based creed," for example, or that the public gives undue weight to academics speaking outside their fields out of a "tendency to exaggerate the degree to which a given human being is a unity." But he is frustratingly averse to doing any thinking. This is not a book that has been crafted. It is a book that has been delivered from mind to keyboard to paper at lightning speed and never looked at again.



Posner has the attention span of a cartoon character. He will veer off an examination of Martha Nussbaum's literary criticism to give us his own thumbnail of Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*—which Nussbaum doesn't address, but which Posner happens to have read. He will stop an attack on Gertrude Himmelfarb in mid-paragraph to sing the praises of the Marx Brothers' *A Night at the Opera*—irrelevant to Himmelfarb, but which Posner happens to have seen. He will drop a discussion of the jeremiad as a literary genre to go chasing after Robert Bork's grounds, in *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, for opposing abortion. This would be interesting in a book on abortion, or in a collection that was honestly titled *Selected Book Reviews of Richard Posner*, but it's not relevant to Posner's public-intellectual points.

Posner embodies many of the shortcomings of the class of people he deplores. He, too, has the academic's literal-mindedness about the integrity of scholarly disciplines. He despairs that Robert Bellah, "although not an economist, businessman, business consultant, or engineer," should write about free-market economics. Of the biologist Stephen Jay Gould's complaint that IQ reifies something unreal, he sneers, "'Reification' is a philosophical rather than a scientific concept . . . so we should not expect Gould to be able to handle it deftly." Nor is he without the academic's turf jealousy. About the only area in which Posner urges a greater role for public intellectuals is in "real time" commentary on stories where journalists would have trouble getting up to speed. By these he means impeachment, the Microsoft antitrust case, and the 2000 election deadlock—all of them legal stories, which would increase the importance of lawyers like Posner and legal experts like his friends. That, in the end, is the real subject of this book, which studies not the world of intellect but the world of fame, focusing, unsurprisingly, on the tiny corner of it that Posner inhabits. **NR**

Dr. D's Diagnosis

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

Life at the Bottom: The Worldview That Makes the Underclass, by Theodore Dalrymple (Ivan R. Dee, 256 pp., $27.50)

GRIM news on the social front seems to be something people everywhere just have to accept as a fact of modern life. But in Britain—solid civilized old Britain, which gave the world fair play and the stiff upper lip—the news is worse than elsewhere. Until quite recently, the poor in Britain lived decent crime-free lives, but now the country is a world-beater in crime, illegitimacy, and illiteracy. The yob has replaced the gentleman as the national stereotype. Where to begin with the recital of everyday cruelty and violence? Last year, to give just one instance, nearly 700,000 mobile telephones were stolen by the young; in other words, half the teenage population has been robbing the other half. Adding insult to injury, blame has been attached not to the little thugs, but to the telephone companies—because they failed to equip their mobiles with some anti-theft device. In the overturning of all previous value judgments, a society is visibly decomposing in front of us.

Theodore Dalrymple is made of other stuff. It is an open secret that his real name is Anthony Daniels—and so he signs other books and articles—and he is a doctor in both a hospital and a prison in Birmingham, a city once the proud heart of Britain's industry but now a compendium of contemporary ills. Over the years, he tells us, he has attended to some ten thousand patients. He has been writing up the observations drawn from this large and representative sample in essays for New York's *City Journal*, collected here into a book.

And an extraordinary book it is. In its pages, the reader learns that Dalrymple is the son of a curmudgeonly former mem-

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ber of the Communist party who had once emerged from the slums through natural intelligence and education. Poverty, the author knows firsthand, is not something to sentimentalize. As a doctor he has worked in the Third World, notably in Africa, taking the measure of a much more profound expanse of human suffering than anything to be found in Britain.

Survival in the Third World is an achievement in itself, and that helps the poor to retain their dignity. In contrast, the Birmingham hospital offers almost unrelieved degradation. Here are teenagers suffering from acute alcohol poisoning, heroin addicts, girls with no idea who the fathers of their children are, women who have been hung out of the windows of high-rise buildings or had their heads rammed down lavatories, psychopaths patterned all over with scars and tattoos, murderers so heedless that one of them can say that he had to kill his victim, "otherwise he didn't know what he might have done." Over two-thirds of the men and women are veterans of domestic violence. Almost every one of the 1,300 patients each year in the toxicology ward has attempted suicide by overdose, usually in order to obtain more benefits from the state. Dalrymple coins an unforgettable maxim: "Misery increases to meet the means available for its alleviation."

It appalls Dalrymple that such numbers of people display sheer ignorance of how to live. Character, will, or ambition might as well not exist. Simple instincts of self-preservation are absent. Instead there is, among them, a profound aversion to anything that smacks of intelligence and education, and so they live in "a squalor which is moral, spiritual, and cultural." Sometimes, in their twenties or thirties, they realize that there must be more to life than this. Usually it is then too late for natural intelligence to save them. "They say I'm stupid because I'm clever," is one poor girl's lament about those taunting her for trying to better herself. Dalrymple has heart-rending stories to tell about those who have tried to break out of this setting of despair but found no support in society.

These people are not poor, of course, as they would be in the Third World. On the contrary, the welfare state caters to all their immediate needs. Their plight is far stranger, and specific to the modern age. Everything in society encourages them to see themselves as victims of abuse or racism or circumstances, one or another blind impersonal force about which nothing can be done. Passively rejecting all responsibility for the choices and actions that have brought them to where they are, they stand condemned to perpetual victimhood.

At this point, Dalrymple's sense of pity erupts into a scathing anger. The poor are so feckless not through some innate defect, but because the welfare state has made them so, depriving them of responsibility for themselves. But the welfare state as such is only an instrument to be used for good or ill. As things stand, it is merely putting into practice ideas fashioned by the liberal intelligentsia, and these are wrong and misguided to the point of wickedness. Liberals think of poverty wholly in material terms: Give the poor four walls and a roof, and that will be enough to fill their moral and spiritual void. But even in the worst slums of the past the poor had self-respect. Liberals think of fulfillment in terms of personal liberty; the sexual revolution in particular was supposed to free men and women from contractual or social obligations. The vulnerability of women, and one person's desire for the exclusive sexual possession of another, have predictably combined in the current explosion of violence between the sexes.

Which is the more damaging: the generalized sentimentality and condescension inflicted on the poor, or the liberals' snobbish assumption of their own superiority? In collaboration, sociologists and criminologists, dehumanizing architects and bureaucrats, teachers opposed to standards and authority, academics who think grammar and spelling are superfluous, the literary celebrators of license and violence and madness, have erected a society where conduct is supposedly value-free, and no one thing is better than another. With their insufferable and unexamined conviction that they know what is best for other people, these liberal wreckers—intellectuals is not the right word—are mutants from Communism and socialism. Together they have practiced a fraud on the poor, making them believe that we truly are not the agents of our destinies but only hapless victims of circumstance. So the blame for stealing mobile telephones is put on the manufacturers and not the thieves; and so another generation grows up in ignorance and crime.

Dalrymple even wonders if the liberals have not had the express purpose of keeping the poor down at the bottom: a caste of Untouchables, forever unable to escape from the boredom and violence to which they are consigned.

In clear and penetrating prose, always fearless for the truth, Dalrymple reports the evidence in front of him. The smelly little orthodoxies mobilizing the welfare state have to be scotched, so that the poor can once more regain the dignity that comes with taking responsibility for themselves. Should this not happen, Daniels warns, the poor will have revenge on the liberals as crime spirals out of control, and the social contract finally breaks down into chronic war.

So far these essays have not found a publisher in unhappy and degenerating Blairistan, formerly Britain. All this simply can't be true, the pooh-poohing liberals reply; Dalrymple must have made it all up. George Orwell once wrote about the social issues of his day with a lucidity and humanity all his own; people did not care to believe him, either, at the time; but he was right. Like Orwell, Dalrymple is disclosing the reality we prefer not to inspect. Also like Orwell, Dalrymple happens to be a nom de plume, and I have no hesitation mentioning the two in the same breath. **NR**

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■ MUSIC ■

Poster Boys

JAY NORDLINGER

THE world loves young, dashing, talented, and handsome, so the baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky and the conductor Christian Thielemann have the world by the tail. Each is a star, with his image splashed all over the place. But each is also a worthy musician, an excellent practitioner of his craft. They deserve their stardom (which is always nice). Lately, they've been strutting their stuff in New York, and we will take a moment to examine that stuff.

Hvorostovsky comes from Krasnoyarsk, Siberia (known to Cold Warriors as the site of the ABM Treaty-violating Soviet radar). His looks are not only dashing, but exotic, which does him no harm on the operatic stage. He is part of a crop of new, or newish, Russian singers who are enjoying international success. He is top dog, however, at least in the male category; he may be seen as the counterpart to Olga Borodina, the stunning, consummately good mezzo-soprano. Quite naturally, a recording company—Philips, to be specific—has gotten them together, in an album titled—plainly if not imaginatively—*Olga and Dmitri*.

In opera, Hvorostovsky is a fairly versatile performer, excelling not only in the Russian roles for baritone (which he practically owns), but in the Verdi roles and in those of the *bel canto* composers (Rossini, Donizetti). Every singer, no matter where he's from, is part Italian; in fact, he is even more specifically part Neapolitan. Hvorostovsky has just duly made a recording called *Passione di Napoli* (available on Delos).

Where he is most valuable, however, is as an interpreter of Russian art song. So too, he is valuable as a singer of Russian liturgical music, of which there is an abundance, largely untapped. Hvorostovsky's album *Credo* (Philips) is a powerful one, and somewhat unusual from an operatic superstar.

It was in his capacity as a song recitalist that New Yorkers heard him recently in Carnegie Hall. His program was all Russian; indeed, it was all Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff, who form the core of this repertory. Olga Borodina is another singer who offers such Russian evenings. Seldom has this little corner of the overall song literature had two such capable and compelling exponents. (I should add that the Polish contralto Ewa Podles is a third singer who is beautifully equipped for, and utterly convincing in, this music.)

Hvorostovsky boasts a big, rich, meaty, juicy, and adaptable instrument. Its upper notes have a gleam, in the best baritone fashion. At its best, Hvorostovsky's voice is a thing of extraordinary beauty; at its worst, it is a bit dry and "contained"—too inward, not released enough—but this is far from intolerable. Hvorostovsky pays careful attention to technique, producing an evenness of sound. His breathing is superb, his intonation reliable. There is nothing he can't manage, technically, which leaves him free to do as he likes, musically.

■

Hvorostovsky and Thielemann are both stars, easily and joyfully marketed. But they are fine musicians to boot.

■

He is an intelligent, penetrating interpreter, treating the music with respect, endeavoring to convey what the composer—as well as the poet, in the case of these songs—had in mind. He is an ever-alert singer, not one to place himself on autopilot or cruise control (as many are prone to doing). The main qualities of these Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff songs—besides their excellence and beauty—are melancholy, regret, and despair. Here's a sample lyric: "Again, as before, I am alone, / Again I am filled with anguish." Another? "The punishing God has taken all from me: / Health, the strength of will, the very air." These are typical. After a couple of hours of this, you are ready for a bottle (or several) of vodka. Hvorostovsky performs these songs feelingly, but with no pathos or overindulgence whatsoever. He is willing to let the music and poetry speak for themselves. Additionally, he is lucky to have a superb partner—both on tours and for recordings—in the pianist Mikhail Arkadiev, who, like Hvorostovsky, is a smart, elegant, and sensitive musician.

Hvorostovsky has recorded all of these songs, but, if anything, he has grown over the years: He is better now than ever, reaching a new maturity and mastery. When he sang an unaccompanied folk song for an encore, one felt that Hvorostovsky had touched the very heart of the Russian vocal culture.

A couple of weeks later, he showed another facet of his work, appearing as Rodrigo in Verdi's *Don Carlo* at the Metropolitan Opera. His singing was, as usual, perfectly correct: smooth, stylish, and accomplished. Yet it lacked a little—to borrow a word from his latest album—*passione*, a little (to use another Italian word) *slancio*, meaning guts, impetuosity, a release: the quality that sometimes makes Verdi singing Verdian. His sound can be, again, a little contained, a little stifled, a tad cold. This is not a matter of nationality, as the Brooklynite Richard Tucker and a million others have proven; but it is so. Nevertheless, Hvorostovsky's professionalism and self-control are remarkable. And as an actor, he is better than opera-adequate. He always makes an audience sit up and take notice; our attention, like his, never wanders.

On to our second poster boy, Christian Thielemann. He is a Berliner, viewed by some as Germany's Great Post-Karajan Hope. Indeed, the late Herbert von Karajan was mentor to Thielemann. The young conductor is *Generalmusikdirektor* of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and he has led many of the world's greatest orchestras—including the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics—in symphonic music. He has made many recordings, generally of the canonical repertory, for—who else?—Deutsche Grammophon. These have been received with enthusiasm, and rightly so.

The news Thielemann has made has not been all musical and pleasant. He was involved in a row a couple of years ago, having to do with Berlin's competing opera houses and their fight for preeminence, money, and, indeed, survival. Daniel Barenboim is music director of the Staatsoper, on the east side of town. One of the city's leading conservative

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politicians made a remark about "the young Karajan" versus "the Jew Barenboim." (Karajan, not entirely incidentally, was a member of the Nazi party.) Dark comments were attributed to Thielemann, which he has denied heatedly. This is not the sort of contretemps that a German conductor and cultural personage needs; but most everyone accepts Thielemann's goodwill and welcomes him joyfully.

New York certainly does. His appearances here are always occasions of excitement. In December and January, he led a stirring production of Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Met. This is a long, sprawling, complicated work, calling for a firm and knowledgeable leader at the helm. (Karl Böhm, a protégé of the composer himself, was a great champion of *Die Frau*.) Thielemann filled the bill splendidly. His conducting was unobtrusive: which is to say, it didn't draw attention to itself; the score simply unfolded—a high tribute to the conductor.

Then Thielemann crossed the plaza at Lincoln Center to lead the New York Philharmonic in a series of concerts featuring the Symphony No. 1 of Brahms. First, however, came what a critic friend of mine calls "the opening obligatory modern piece"—the piece an orchestra plays to keep nagging critics of a certain mindset off their backs (or in part for this reason). In this case, the O.O.M.P. was a work by Peter Ruzicka called *Nachtstück*. Ruzicka is a German composer who is also a music administrator (among other things); he is, in fact, the new artistic director of the Salzburg Festival. (Memo to musicians: If you want to curry favor with the Salzburg Festival, consider programming Ruzicka.)

Thielemann and the orchestra made what seemed the best case possible for *Nachtstück*, a rather routine product, like innumerable others. The Philharmonic players—famously difficult with guest conductors, and with their own, actually—were disciplined under Thielemann, responsive to his baton. Thielemann is very clear about what he wants, communicating in big, unmistakable gestures. He displays charisma on the podium, but is not overly showy. He is a leader in command.

He has exceptionally clear ideas about the Brahms. To begin with, he drew a surprisingly plush sound from the orchestra; also, it was darker, more burnished than it normally is. The opening of the symphony had great drama and tension. Nothing was hurried through. The tempo was slow, but it had huge energy behind it, or underneath it. Thielemann shaped the music beautifully; he was careful, determined, but not unnaturally calculating. The entire first movement was hair-raising, newborn. It was also very Romantic, with liberal phrases and sighs, but mindful of the Classical structure. Astounding things came from this young, confident maestro.

The second movement—Andante sostenuto—however, was a little too languid and elastic; it was—this is a fault of Thielemann's—overly managed, "micromanaged," to use a recently popular term. Thielemann sometimes tried to force things instead of letting the score flow naturally. The orchestra turned sloppy, too, and many of the attacks were poor. But the delightful, pastoral third movement glowed and burbled, just as it should.

The beginning of the final movement was as spellbinding and well conceived as that of the first: pregnant with suspense, emotion, and anticipation. It positively tingled, restoring the thrill of a work that can seem hackneyed. It stood on tiptoe, waiting for the great, closing C-major hymn. Thereafter, however, matters were more suspect. Thielemann usually managed to sustain his slow, elastic tempos; this was a Brahms First of grandeur and majesty. But some of the huge ritardandos were, indeed, "unnaturally calculating," distorting of the music—forced, overmanaged. It made you want to run home and slap cold water on your face with a Toscanini recording (all business, no dawdling or savoring) of the work.

Yet Thielemann is obviously an important young conductor, who will become an important older conductor. He is an instinctively musical person who has been well trained—hard to do better than that. And, as with Dmitri Hvorostovsky, it's nice to know that, even as we regret the passing of favorites from the past, we do not run out of musicians. We may endure a fallow period or two, but, blessedly, they replenish themselves. **NR**

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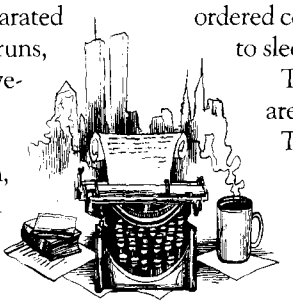
■ CITY DESK ■

The N.Y. Difference

RICHARD BROOKHISER

SOMETIMES New York just tires you out. Work is tiring; play is tiring; commuting is tiring, whether by subway if you live in town, or by train or car if you come in from the suburbs, or by car or bus if you have a weekend place in the country (New York can make even relaxation tiring). So you have to get away, to some place like Spanish Town in the Caribbean, where the temperature falls to 83 degrees before dawn and rises to 85 degrees in the middle of the afternoon, where the micro-activity is the waves and the macro-activity is the tide, and where the tallest things are the century plants on Cow Hill. But even as leaving is part of New York life, so is coming back. At the interface of return everything becomes fresh again, and for a moment the strangeness of New York is actually strange.

It starts with the nighttime lights as the flight lumbers into JFK. There are many more of them in New York than there are in Spanish Town. What is even more noticeable is the greater density. The lights of Spanish Town are separated by dark rural patches—goat runs, chicken rambles, junk-car graveyards. People in the outer boroughs have little grass patches to put their Nativity scenes on, but no New Yorker has had a real yard for a hundred years. When the Trade Towers fell, a plane tree outside St. Paul's Chapel toppled in the blast. The buildings will be rebuilt before such a tree grows again; we want the buildings, as is proved by the fact that Manhattan has more skyscrapers than plane trees.



There are more people in New York than in Spanish Town, obviously, but there are many more night people, even at 11:15 on a Sunday. At that hour, we could not order from our favorite takeout place, so we had to choose between the two good 23-hour-a-day restaurants within five minutes of our apartment building. The only difference night made was that we got a smaller rather than a larger booth at the restaurant we chose because the day staff, which knows us, was off (probably out partying). We ordered coffee, with caffeine: Why try to sleep? We were already up.

The stars over Spanish Town are huge, passive, and lustrous. The Pleiades there recall Sappho (freely translated): "The moon has set / But not the Pleiades / Let's have a Red Stripe." The stars over New York are hard, watchful little points. The real stars are the headlights, the spots under apartment awnings to light the doorman's stand-up, the neon in the windows of all-night delis.

Dawn brings the sound of life everywhere. In Spanish Town, the ground doves, which look like cinnamon buns, start weeping, and you become aware of the hushing mother at the beach: *ssh, ssh*. In New York, the lady upstairs with high heels begins pacing over the floor she will never carpet; the surf of traffic rolls up Third Avenue. Despite the blackout curtain you have pulled to prolong the night that you shortened at the other end by drinking regular coffee, it's time for a new day.

In Spanish Town, the resorts offer wan faxed digests of the *New York Times*, while the supermarkets carry true-confession tabloids and magazines about Jesus. The New York street bombards you with information. Each newsstand tells you everything you never wanted to know. *Death*, says the *Daily News*. SEX, says the *Post*. "Reports of the latest developments have developed as previously reported," say the *Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In Spanish Town, almost-naked women walk the beach; at the newsstand, almost-naked women walk the covers of *Maxim* and *Stuff*, and these women are Jennifer Lopez and Heidi Klum.

There are taxis in Spanish Town, but they are big twelve-seater candy-colored vans, yellow and pink and green and blue, and if the radio is on, it is playing old Bob Marley, croaking about

SECOND SIGHT

The first lovemaking lovers may foresee
As they lie side by side, or singly in the sun.
The last one only lives as memory.

Otherwise, who could endure it? Coldly
Nightbirds cry the ending has begun.
The first lovemaking lovers may foresee

Arising like half-imagined melody
Or a cradle of stars on the horizon.
The last one only lives as memory.

Though legend has it heroes lustily
Bed down before shipwreck or execution,
The first lovemaking lovers can foresee

As Death arrests them, lies in eternity,
Should Death be cruel to two and take just one.
The last one only lives as memory.

Bitter, the dark joy that pulsed in me
That night we spent so near oblivion.
The first lovemaking lovers may foresee,
The last one only lives as memory.

—DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN

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"Jammin'" from the big Ethiopia in the sky. Many of the taxi drivers in New York are West Indian, but their vehicles are sleek yellow sacs—aggressive metal wombs—and the radio is likely to be the 24-hour news station, WINS: "You give us 22 minutes, we'll give you the world [in stentorian tones]" TIK TIK-A-TIK-TIK TIK-A-TIK TIK [metal xylophone sounds] ". . . crash on the Sawmill . . . on the Van Wyck . . . on the BQE . . . the AccuWeather forecast [syllables trampling on each other]." In Spanish Town, if someone had too much Red Stripe and zoomed over a cliff, how would that affect other drivers? And what weather forecast can there be, when every day is like the last and the next, except in hurricane season, when everything is flattened?

The clothing in Spanish Town is as colored as the cabs. The paleface tourists wear shirts like conservatories, festooned with palm fronds and banana leaves; the dark-skinned schoolchildren, in the Catholic and Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist schoolyards, wear uniforms of plum or cherry. But New Yorkers, even the day people, are dressed in black—now, not only because it is fashionable and cool, but because we are death's attendants, we have been conscripted into the Swiss Guard of Ground Zero.

You know, though, that you have truly come back when you start watching the time the way you did before you left. In Spanish Town, you don't do lunch with anyone, and you have nothing to do before lunch, so it doesn't matter when before-lunch slides into lunchtime. You can finish the article in *Vanity Fair* or the chapter in *Oblomov*, or swim out to the raft or to the dock, or watch the pelican gravely spear his lunch, gulp it down, and do his little waggle of victory. In New York, you have made a lunch appointment with your friend, who might also give you an assignment or an idea for a proposal, but you are just trying to stuff an argument into a paragraph before you go, when the phone rings. And now, because it is still not yet routine, you ask yourself, why am I doing three things at once? Why am I doing three things? This is why, in New York, the after-dinner mints, after the regular coffee, are Rolaids, and why, after 52 weeks of chewing them, you will go away again. But you always come back. **NR**

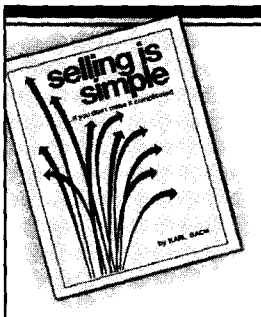
■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Christianity on Trial: Arguments Against Anti-Religious Bigotry, by Vincent Carroll and David Shiflett (Encounter, 244 pp., $15.95)

WHEN Pope John Paul II began, a few years ago, his litany of repentance for the sins of Christians throughout history, he made many Christians uneasy: At a time when the "tolerance" of secular culture amounts to a polite contempt for religion, why would any Christian leader choose to open his flock to even more abuse? But John Paul, like the authors of *Christianity on Trial*, respects history. History, like memory, has power, shaping both the present and the future, giving us context and meaning. This is why a man with amnesia is, in a sense, a "non-person": He's liable to believe anything about his past that outsiders choose to tell him. So too with cultures: When we forget our past, we lose our identity. Thus, when the Pope publicly repents for sins of Christians in the past—a task he calls the "purification of memory"—he's recommitting his Church to justice and truth, and giving notice that he expects the same honesty from others.

As Carroll and Shiflett persuasively show, however, the unhappy ax-grinding of secularized intellectuals seriously distorts Christianity's record—and this is bad news for the future, because we can't avoid past mistakes if we don't properly understand them. The authors correctly observe that "anti-Christian bigotry relies on forgetfulness and loss of perspective. Its antidote is historical memory." They draw the reader into a clear, compelling, and rigorously honest encounter with history. They neither downplay the sins of Christians nor descend into polemics; instead, they offer a skilled, informed, readable examination of the case *against* Christianity—and why, too frequently, that case is not merely wrong or overstated, but dishonest. The "trial" of Christianity by today's critics too often resembles a kangaroo court; this book offers an intelligent alternative.

—FRANCIS X. MAIER



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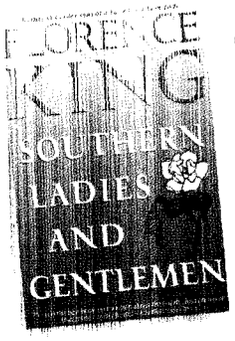

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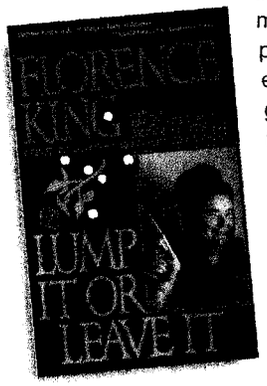

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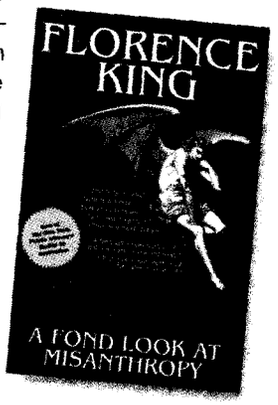

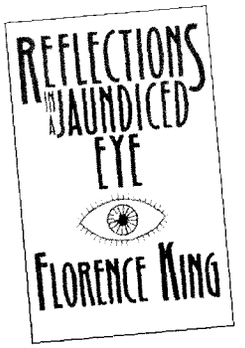

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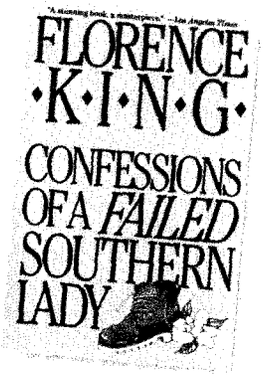

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Long Arm of the Single Actor

NEW YORK, JANUARY 8

JOHN BURNS of the *New York Times* cracks the story of an anonymous aide, of the plight of General Musharraf. The Pakistani leader is said to have telephoned the U.S. ambassador to Islamabad to ask a serious and entirely understandable question. That question is relayed as follows: "What if some outraged Kashmiri takes a Kalashnikov and shoots an Indian politician or puts a bomb in a parking lot? Is Pakistan going to be held accountable every time anybody picks up a weapon? Is Washington saying that all freedom struggles, everywhere, can be suppressed under the guise of the war on terrorism?"

The second point made here strikes at the heart of a definitional problem that, beginning years ago, beset the United Nations. In 1973 the United States introduced a resolution condemning terrorist activity. It never carried through the appropriate committee because it was burdened with so many equivocations as to make it useless. Most prominently critical of it, back then, were African leaders, who insisted that any apparently terrorist acts committed against the governments of Rhodesia and South Africa were not really terrorist acts, but initiatives in national liberation.

That construction of the right of protesters gives them a kind of juridical authority. In conventional understanding, someone who fires at a foreign official can claim the protections of war only if he is deputized to do as he did by his government. He is, otherwise, a pirate, prowling about until he is caught and hanged. Musharraf is asking out loud for some kind of provision to be made for incontinent liberators who do not want to wait for diplomacy to settle their problems, taking their own initiatives—as terrorists, we call them. On this matter, the correct response from President Bush is: *The people you are talking about are terrorists, period.*

The first question is more difficult. Is India supposed to assume that there was tacit backing by the government of Pakistan of the five militants who attacked the Indian Parliament on December 13? Musharraf is denying any condonation of the act; India is saying, Prove your dissociation from it by rounding up the people who supported it and putting them in jail. Musharraf wavers. Question: Because he is secretly in sympathy with the Kashmiri militants? Or because he reasons that to go after them at the very same time that, on his western flank, he is pursuing the Taliban, would take him over the line, risking the very survival of his government, yielding then to an uprising or even a coup?

The Israeli government tends automatically to suppose, with plenty of precedent, that terrorist attacks on Israelis are expressions of Arafat's determination to undermine Israel. Arafat has in most cases dissociated the PLO from the terrorist acts, and Prime Minister Sharon is usually saying, Prove your dissociation by going after centers of militant anti-Israeli activity.

Whatever one concludes personally about the likelihood of Arafat's responsibility, we do need to focus on procedural matters. Arafat has a bloody record, altering the presumptions, to his disadvantage. Musharraf is somewhere in between, so what are we asking of him?

The United States wants him to do two things to fortify plausibility: 1) Stop the Muslim polemical organs that preach an irreconcilable irredentism on Kashmir; and, 2) outlaw the money-gathering devices by which the militants are empowered.

Those are pretty concrete means of satisfying critical suspicion that Musharraf isn't endorsing terrorist activity against India. But he now needs to weigh action on these lines, against the risk of provoking the militarist Right.

"Of course you may see your lawyer—that's him over there."

But he, and the world, are entitled to thoughtful attention given to the question he raised: Is the lone actor, in an age in which lone actors can do so much, all that's needed to precipitate great wars?

The Dinner Party in London

NEW YORK, JANUARY 11

THE vibrations of a dinner in London almost a month ago ripple on. In *Newsday*, former New York mayor Ed Koch demands, no less, that all supporters of Israel "should boycott French wine, cheese, perfume and clothing, as well as refuse to visit France as tourists." For how long? "Until the French government recalls its ambassador to Britain, and either cashiers or demotes him." Yesterday, a prominent (and, coincidentally, also titled) British woman—rich, philanthropic, Jewish, thunderously articulate—in a private visit with my wife and me reported on the British *affaire Bernard*. Two questions are raised: 1) Did the remark of the French ambassador to London at the dinner party of Conrad Black (Lord Black) amount to de facto anti-Semitism? And 2) Did the journalist who published his remarks violate decorum? Add to the mix that the incident was reported by journalist Barbara Amiel, who in real life is Lady Black; and that her husband was the host of the party and that the column was published in the newspaper he owns.

To divulge all my personal conflicts in talking about the subject, let me record that my five closest friends in the entire world are my informant at lunch, Barbara Amiel, Conrad Black, Ed Koch, and Ronald Reagan. Now to proceed with the story.

At the dinner party in December, French ambassador Daniel Bernard, in a discussion of Mideast policies with neighbors at his table, remarked that after all, Israel was a "sh*tt* little country," no larger in area than two French departments, causing him to wonder "why should the world be in danger of World War III because of those people?"

London awoke in shock, though one wonders whether the pain was greater

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because of this sign of apparent anti-Semitism, or because of the perceived violation of protocol in reporting it.

For days the French embassy said nothing, but finally rejected completely any suggestion that M. Bernard was anti-Semitic, whatever he actually said, denying that he had used vulgar language. A complication in understanding the episode stems from the unfortunate fact that Monsieur Bernard is a teetotaler, forfeiting him the shelter of alcoholic hyperbole. But then tension increased hugely upon the report, also by journalist Amiel, that another British society leader, "doyenne of London's political salon scene" at a private lunch (what *is* a private lunch in London these days?) "made a remark that she couldn't stand Jews and everything happening to them was their own fault. When this was greeted with a shocked silence, she chided her guests on what she assumed was their hypocrisy. 'Oh come on,' she said, 'you all feel like that.'"

That lady was identified as the wife of Charles Powell, also a lord, sometime secretary to prime minister Margaret Thatcher, and a business man of affairs in the Mideast. Everybody on that flank denied everything.

Our own British visitor, inquisitive about American reaction to the affair, cited Ambassador Bernard's defense that what was said had to be taken in context. If his point was as simple as that world wars should not be risked over small territorial disputes, the observation is not indisputably animated by anti-Semitism, inasmuch as the point could be made about Taiwan, or Singapore, or East Timor. Is there the explanation that the ambassador was simply letting off steam, even if unfueled by wine? Or, as Amiel believes, do we have here an expression of latent hostility by the French government to Jews and their entire enterprise in Israel?

Edward Koch a couple of years ago described almost parenthetically the America First Committee as "pro-Nazi." I protested. "You, dear Edward, make life truly impossible for those who try to keep things straight when you level such charges." On the subject of Israel and indeed anti-Semitism, the problem is always there, to think reasonably. But it is reasonable to suppose that the French ambassador was indeed letting off anti-Semitic sentiments, reasonable to argue that journalist Amiel should have yielded to the protocols of hostess Black, yet reasonable to conclude that the entire episode is a contribution to informed thought about what is going on in the minds of the governing classes in England and France.

Hold Your Horses

NEW YORK, JANUARY 15

It is held, and I too hold to it, that as long as we know what financial/political money exchanges amount to, we can make the relevant judgments. If you have the means of establishing that Congressman Quick received $25,000 last year from the Demolition Firearms Company, you can put the kind of pressure on him, when time comes to vote on the new gun-control law, that will keep him honest. This link is so widely advertised as to generate the wisecrack that any politician who is truly anxious to help somebody or something is wise to ask the intended benefactor kindly not to send him a campaign contribution.

These conceptual generalities fall, often, to the ground. It's like the problem we have with local government: The rule is, keep the exercise of power to the lowest possible echelon in the line of command, because that way you can keep a keener eye on the people who make the laws. Your problem becomes a problem between you and an official you can lay your eyes on, not a remote senator or a Supreme Court justice who doesn't know your name, whose own name you wish you had never heard of. All of which is absolutely true, but every day, you run into this pothole in your life that you can't get your local alderman to do anything about.

In Enron, the chief executives who sold their stock did so publicly, that being the law. What that law says is that executive officers of a company have to record any sale in the stock of their company within ten days of the end of the month. Consider, then, the case of Kenneth Lay, who was chairman and CEO of Enron. In a little over two years, he sold stock 350 times. That means that on an average day, he sold stock, sometimes a lot of stock, sometimes not so much, but anybody who looked around would have been justified in thinking him a kind of Enron-stock-dispensing machine.

Surely his name affixed to statements of stock sales month after month over two years would have aroused interest in professional stock evaluators, who would have passed the word down to their clients. ("*The big man is selling.* He must know something we don't know. Let's move to another investment.") When Enron nose-dived, the good Mr. Lay was still holding millions of shares of his company, worth about $7.70. Either he didn't sell more than he did because he was stupid (a possible explanation); or because he was afraid of calling greater attention to the trickle that was seeping out of the sinking ship (a possible explanation); or because he harbored the hope that Enron's problems would turn the corner and that some day his millions of shares would be worth $700 million (which is about what they were worth when Enron was trading high).

The question everybody has is: Did Lay himself have information that governed his conduct, information that he withheld from the shareholders? Perhaps. On the other hand, the day the accountants changed their opinion on how to classify $586 million of alleged five-year profit wasn't until November 2001, a mere month before Enron went for bankruptcy. The primal scream we hear comes, quite reasonably, from people who lost money on Enron, most poignantly, employees whose savings and retirement money were forfeit. But an entire tier of money-men are hopeful that the forthcoming investigation will establish that buying Enron, during those giddy days, was an apparently smart thing to do. If it was a dumb thing to do, those who were induced to buy will have a brief against their advisers. It pays to remind ourselves that every share sold meant one share bought.

Now if it transpires that the whole thing was a Ponzi scheme, then the public fastens its eyes not so much on the venality of Mr. Lay and his associates (if it proves that they were fraudulently deceptive) as on the accountants. The whole idea of accounting is to o'er-leap management and report to shareholders what actually is going on. If the accountants misread what was going on on so grand a scale, then they were blind or wicked, and attention reasonably turns to how to devise accountant codes that even blind accountants can follow.

Meanwhile, it is wise to brace oneself to hear all the clichés that are trotted out at every opportunity to attempt to discredit the theory of capitalism, whose unhappy side is that just as there are winners, there are also losers.

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■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

THANK you for the birthday gifts, including the four low-tech alarm clocks, one of which, as my vigilant post office noted, arrived ticking. We have given "white noise" new meaning and rewritten an old adage: "Be careful what you wish for; NR readers might send it to you."

The arrival of my 66th birthday finds me confronting a hard fact: I'm turning into an odd duck. There are some who would not regard this as a new development, but I refer to the psychological changes said to come with advancing age.

The most surprising change is that I no longer love to read the way I once did. I used to read one book after another—literally—finishing one and immediately starting a second, spending whole days reading books by the yard. Now I pick up a book, read a few pages, see right through the author, and toss it aside in disgust. All I feel like reading now are a few beloved books that I've read over and over, like *Katherine*, by Anya Seton.

I also cancelled all my subscriptions except the *Washington Post* and NR. Most columns and op-eds seem so predictable to me now; I can read the first paragraph and know exactly where it's going, so why pay for that? I've been gleefully adding up my refunds like a miser—something I've never been, in my free-spending, big-tipping life. Chalk up another change.

The subscription I resented the most was that rock quarry of the printed word, the Sunday *New York Times*. I wasn't reading anything in it except Maureen Dowd, who is an "uneven" writer (good when she's good; "off" the rest of the time). I kept remembering the old Peter Arno cartoon of an exhausted dog, feet splayed, tongue hanging out, clearly moribund, being examined by a vet. The caption reads: "I see he's been retrieving the Sunday *New York Times*." I felt like the dog.

I kept telling myself that I needed to subscribe "for professional reasons," but finally admitted that the only thing I enjoyed was the acrostic in the magazine. I tried to subscribe to the magazine only, but was told you can't: They know in their hearts that the puzzle page is all most people want, so to keep from going bankrupt they make you subscribe to the whole paper.

Spending $200 a year on a puzzle was ridiculous, so I cancelled, deciding to xerox the acrostic at the public library. Trouble was, somebody had torn the puzzle page out of the magazine before I got to it. (See what I mean? Nobody in his right mind would steal the op-ed page.) When the librarian saw it, she volunteered to call another branch to see if they had an intact magazine, and have them fax the page to me. They did, and in minutes I had my acrostic.

I tell this story for a reason: to analyze the rush of gratitude—yea, worship—that came over me. It wasn't about getting the acrostic, it was the librarian's attitude. True, it is undeniably heartening in present-day America to find efficiency and promptness amid the purple mountains of human error that dot the fruitcake plain, but that doesn't quite explain it. The fact is, my uncharacteristically plaintive reaction was that of an old person: Someone had very kindly gone out of her way to help me.

Psychologists call this a "breakthrough," others call it an "epiphany." Whatever it's called, I had another one a few days later while cutting my toenails. It's been hard to do lately because my joints are stiff and it hurts to bend my legs into the necessary position, but this time I suffered the added pain of regret.

When I was in college, my grandmother was only a little older than I am now; it must have hurt her to cut her toenails too. Why, instead of running around with boys, didn't I go over to the house and cut her toenails for her? It would have been such a simple favor, but I didn't do it. It never even crossed my mind because I could twist my supple young legs into any position (the '55 T-Bird was a veritable workout salon) and assumed everyone else could too. My sins of commission never weighed on me and still don't, but that one small sin of omission will be on my conscience for the rest of my life.

My new aversion to reading is matched by a literal aversion that has come over my palate: I've lost my taste for booze. I mixed a martini on Christmas but couldn't get it down. I'm now into wine, which I never liked before. Go figure. My physical reaction may have to do with aging, but what interests me more is my new psychological oddity.

I'm saving the corks from my wine bottles. I don't know why, except that cork is expensive, and Marcel Proust lined his walls with it to keep out noise while he wrote. I found myself thinking that when I save enough of them, I can make myself a life preserver. Why I should want a life preserver I can't say, since I don't go near the water. But it just seems a shame to throw away all those perfectly good corks, so I save them in an old duffel bag. I can't wait to see what it will look like when it's full. Go figure.

I have none of the conventional symptoms of geriatric depression, though I did feel sad when Rachel Gurney died. She played Lady Marjorie in *Upstairs, Downstairs*, and was my favorite British actress next to Judi Dench. I don't have any American favorites; they all look alike, sound alike, and expose what I could swear is the same bosom.

If I should ever suffer depression, the most likely cause will be America (make that "Amurrica") itself. I look at it through spread fingers, like a juror looking at gruesome autopsy photos, masochistically fascinated by its coagulated smarminess, mangled syntax, and severed logic: the Black Dahlia of the Western world.

Sometimes I think about spending my final years in France, where I could smoke in peace, or England, where my blood began. I would live in Lincoln because Lady Katherine Swynford, the heroine of my favorite novel, is buried in the cathedral. When the time came, I would want to shoot myself beside her tomb. Unfortunately, there's no way to transport my gun to England, so I shall have to swallow a cork. **NR**

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